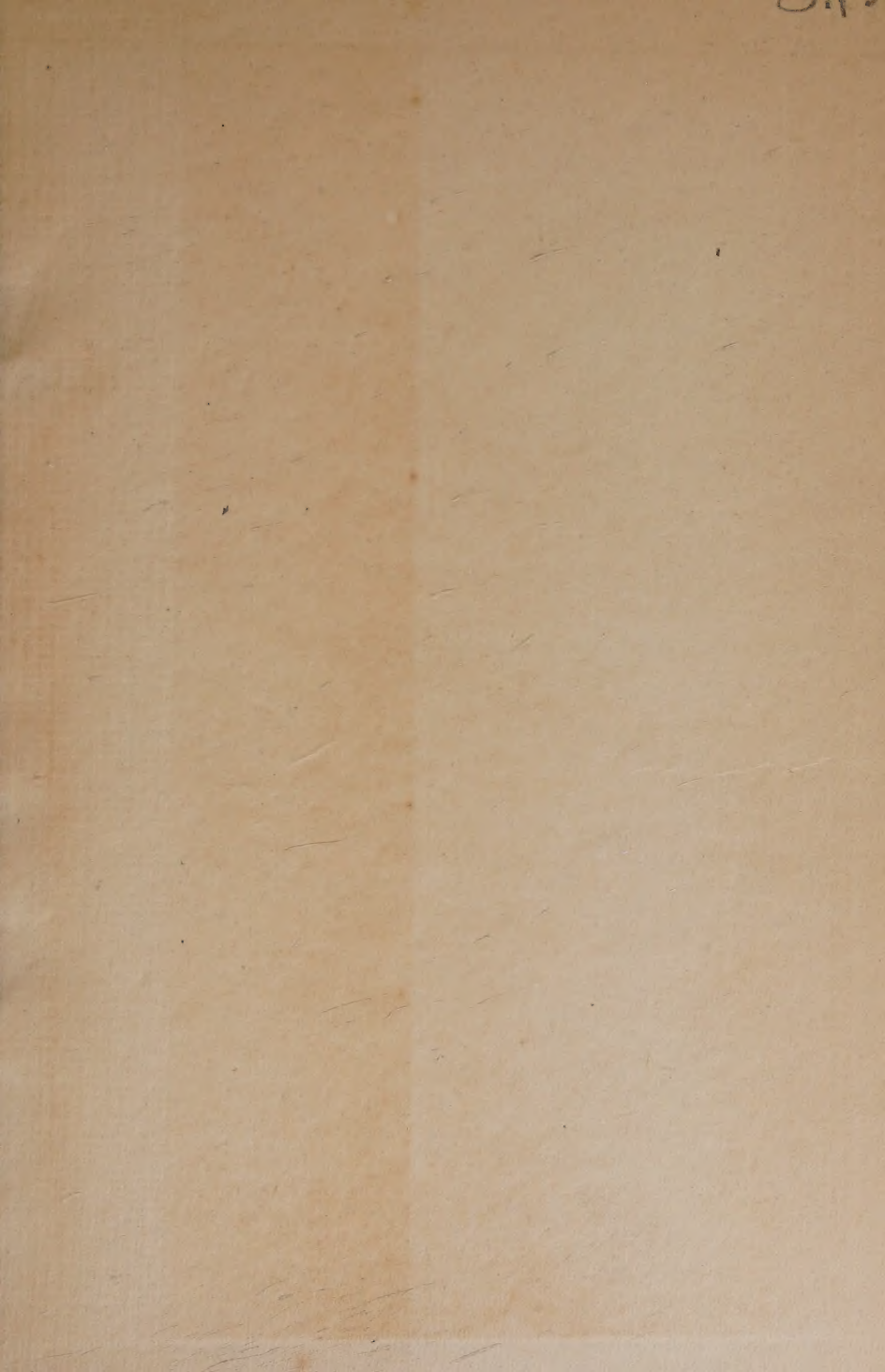




WHITE HORSE AND RED LION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

Belles-Lettres

L. OF C. (LINES OF COMMUNICATION)
FANTASIES AND IMPROMPTUS
ON AN ENGLISH SCREEN

Novel

RESPONSIBILITY

Essays of the Theatre

BUZZ, BUZZ!
ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS
AT HALF-PAST EIGHT
THE CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

WHITE HORSE AND RED LION

ESSAYS IN GUSTO

by

JAMES AGATE



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TO
G. H. MAIR
FOR HIS GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

Contents

	PAGE
A HANDFUL OF ROGUES	11
A GREAT MAN AND SOME HORSES	49
AN OLD ACTOR	71
A SPRING RUNNING	85
THE INCOMPARABLE BAERLEIN	93
HALF-REMEMBERED THINGS	111
MORE ADVICE TO THE PLAYERS	117
IN BLOOMSBURY	131
EXIT "KID" LEWIS	139
IN A MUSIC-HALL	147
A KING OF EGYPT	155
THE BATTLE OF THE SQUARES	167
HITHER AND DITHER	175
THOSE PUPPETS	189
WHEN SUMMER COMES	197
AN UNRUFFLED OLYMPIAN	211
AN OLD-FASHIONED NOVEL	219
NOT MY SET	237
A GEM	247
SCISSORS AND PASTE	251

INNUENDO

A PUBLICAN desired an artist to paint him a sign. The artist agreed, saying he had long wanted to paint a red lion. The publican preferred a white horse. The artist stood his ground, and for a time they wrangled, until, finally, the publican pointed out that it was he who was paying for the sign. "If you put it like that," said the artist, "you shall have a white horse. *But don't be surprised if it looks like a red lion!*"

A Handful of Rogues

A Handful of Rogues

THE world has gone mad about bed-books; I cannot pick up a paper without seeing somebody's "best dozen" or "best hundred." The tired brain would seem to couch best on platitude. At least I can find no other reason for all those sayings of Marcus Aurelius, Snippets from George Eliot, Posies Gathered from Anna Laetitia Barbault. For many years I have been content with three bed-books—*The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Diary of a Nobody*, and *A Book of Scoundrels*. Bunyan I read at all times; Grossmith's *Diary*—"without a copy of which I regard any bedroom I occupy as unfurnished," wrote Lord Rosebery—breathing, as it does, the very spirit of Ecclesiastes, subdues me when I am over-merry; the Whibley sustains me when I am too sad. I have always adored this singer of rogues. Let those who will find comfort in Pritchard and Palmer, Cream, Crippen, and the Seddons. I mislike these pale, pestilent poisoners; they are indoor villains, exhaling the miasma of the sick-room, and their end is accomplished in a little shed. Give me Captain Hind and Sixteen-String Jack, Gentleman Harry and The Switcher. They knew the heath, the highway, and the street. Their rascality was declared, and the journey to Tyburn Tree was an honoured progress, even an apotheosis. Maidens strewed flowers in their path, and weeping doxies pinned a last nosegay in

White Horse and Red Lion

their ragged coats. "He went very decent to the gallows, with a clean napkin, and an orange in his hand," makes the most soothing of lullabies.

Some little time ago I chanced upon a treasure-trove, so that my bed-books became four. The find was nothing less than *The Pocket Newgate Calendar. A Series of Authentic Memoirs of Characters Most Famous in their Day*. The title falls pleasantly on the ear, and you realise that these are the diaries of Somebodies, whose fame is net, clear, precise. Nor does a certain lowness, which the particular may lay to their charge, lack better sanction than mine. *The Newgate Calendar* kept the Bible company as the two favourite books of George Borrow, but the former is a cumbersome affair too heavy for the coverlet. The author of my compendium is one Charles Cavendish, Esq., of the Inner Temple; its printers are Thomas Allman of Holborn Hill and William Walker of Otley. By Otley I take it that the little Yorkshire town is meant where a horse show of spirit acclaims the sweet of the year. Or if it be the Ipswich Otley, then we may think of the Suffolk Punch and the short-legged, broad-beamed Hackney. In either case I like to think that my publisher had as good an eye to a nag as to a rogue. For horses were horses in those days, though Ainsworth lied about Dick Turpin's mare. Still, it was a lie on the right side, and it matters little that it was in Charles the Second's reign that the thirteen-hour ride from Barnet to York was accomplished, and that it was under the second George that Turpin

A Handful of Rogues

was turned off. History would have this legendary hero a coward, but again no matter. The age was heroic in point both of horses and riders. I like to think that my good nagsman from Otley had the pluck to gamble upon the public desiring to carry in their pockets a convenient record of the doings of Great Men.

My little book begins, quite properly, with Jack Sheppard. If I could not have been Nelson, I swear I would have chosen to be Jack. This captivating prison-breaker and slip-string had as much genius in his own line as Hogarth, who visited him in the condemned cell, and more than Sir James Thornhill, who would have immortalised him on canvas. "No felon ever made more noise in the world," says Cavendish with sublime simplicity, and it is a good epitaph. On the subject of Thornhill's picture, the *British Journal* bursts into poetry:—

"Thornhill, 'tis thine to gild with fame
Th' obscure, and raise the humble name;
To make the form elude the grave,
And Sheppard from oblivion save.

Tho' life in vain the wretch implores,
An exile to the farthest shores;
Thy pencil brings a kind reprieve,
And bids the dying robber live.

This piece to latest times shall stand,
And show the wonders of thy hand;
Thus former masters grac'd their name,
And gave egregious robbers fame.

White Horse and Red Lion

Apelles Alexander drew,
Cæsar is to Aurelius due;
Cromwell in Lilly's works doth shine,
And Sheppard, Thornhill, lives in thine."

Alexander, Cæsar, Cromwell—this is a goodly company to have joined. The swelling style suits your rogue; Mr. Whibley found it impossible to explain the superiority of Rance and Gilderoy over their fellows otherwise than by parallels drawn from Euripides and the poets he overshadowed, Michael Angelo's eclipse of Donatello, the dwarfing of Keats by Shelley.

But none ever dwarfed our Jack. Once a week I make in fancy that last perilous escape, and rejoice that my guide is no bungling, second-hand reporter but the incomparable master himself. "As my last escape from Newgate," says Jack, "out of the strong room called the Castle, has made a greater noise in the world than any other action of my life, I shall relate every minute circumstance thereof as far as I am able to remember, intending thereby to satisfy the curious, and do justice to the ignorant." The last phrase is a wonderful touch. Jack could conceive acquaintance with his genius as part of the rightful heritage of mankind. Mr. Kneebone, the woollen merchant whom Sheppard had robbed, was present when the handcuffs were put on. The soft-hearted draper blubbered, and Jack had the wit to blubber too, knowing that he could take the irons off with his teeth. But it were as well to lull his keepers to a

A Handful of Rogues

sense of security. At three o'clock in the afternoon of Thursday, the 15th of October, 1724, armed only with a crooked nail, Jack slipped his handcuffs, twisted by main strength a small piece of the chain between his legs, drew the feet-locks up to his calves and made them fast with his garters to prevent jingling. He then made a hole in the castle chimney three feet wide and six feet from the floor, and wrenched out an iron bar, two and a half feet in length and an inch square. With this he made a breach into the Red room over the castle; here he found a great nail. He then broke the door into the entry leading to the chapel. Here he was forced to break a second door and yet a third, and after that two more. I always lose myself in the exact number of obstacles between the chapel and the leads. I imagine it was five in all. Part of the work was accomplished in the dark, and it was striking eight by St. Sepulchre's clock with two doors to go. Five hours' desperate work, in momentary fear of detection, his heart in his mouth, little or nothing in his belly and only Jack's high heart to keep him going. Once on the leads, our hero found the jump too great, and was forced to go back for his blanket. Fixing this into Newgate wall with a spike which he had wrenched off in the chapel, Jack lowered himself on to the turner's leads, a house adjoining the prison. It was now nine o'clock. Fortunately the garret door was open. Down two pair of stairs the boy went, and then heard company talking in a room, the door being open. "My irons gave a

White Horse and Red Lion

small clink, which made a woman cry, 'Lord ! what noise is that ?' A man replied, ' Perhaps the dog or cat,' and so it went off." He returned to the garret, and being terribly fatigued laid himself down for two hours. Then once more he crept down to where the company were, "and heard a gentleman taking his leave, being very importunate to be gone, saying he had disappointed some friends by not going home sooner." What thief of our better-educated day would be able to write, or know the meaning of "importunate" ? Perhaps we must see the Ordinary's hand here. Then follows a passage which bears the stamp of truth. "In about three-quarters more, the gentleman took leave and went." Do we not know those leave-takers, those uncomfortable guests who have every talent save that of departure ? Jack could invent escapes ; he could never have imagined those three-quarters of an hour which the gentleman occupied in getting himself out of company. The maid, who had lighted the visitor out, on returning shut the chamber-door where the family was, Jack slipped downstairs, stumbled, recovered, was instantly in the entry and out at the street-door, which he was so unmannerly as not to shut after him. "I was once more, contrary to my expectation, and that of all mankind, a free man."

"And that of all mankind." There speaks the artist, the incorrigible egoist persuaded that in him the world centres. Is it any wonder that we take Jack to our hearts ?

Once in the open air, our hero passed directly

A Handful of Rogues

by St. Sepulchre's watch-house, "bidding them good-morrow, it being after twelve," thence down Snowhill, up Holborn, past the watch-house at Holborn Bars, down Gray's-Inn Lane into the fields, coming at two in the morning to Tottenham Court, where he slept in a cow-shed. At seven on the Friday morning rain fell, and continued the whole day, so that nobody was seen in the fields. Sheppard lay snug, venturing out after dark as far as Tottenham for provisions, he having fifty shillings or so in his pockets. Friday and Saturday passed, and still Jack lay low. On Sunday afternoon the master of the shed came in, and seeing Jack's irons, asked him who he was. "I told him, 'An unfortunate young man, who had been sent to Bridewell about a bastard child, as not being able to give a security to the parish, and had made my escape.' The man replied, 'If that be the case it was a small fault indeed, for he had been guilty of the same himself formerly;' and withal said, 'however, he did not like my looks, and cared not how soon I was gone.' " Jack gave twenty of his remaining shillings to a shoemaker to rid him of his fetters, and that night came to a cellar at Charing Cross, where he refreshed himself comfortably with roast veal. Monday he sheltered in Rupert Street, and on Tuesday took lodgings in Newport market, sending for his mother and a sober, steady young woman who had for a long time been mistress of Jack's humble affections. And then his vanity undid him. Having successfully rifled a pawnbroker in Drury Lane, he, with

White Horse and Red Lion

part of the booty thereof, went about the town making "an extraordinary appearance, and, from a carpenter and butcher, was now transformed into a perfect gentleman." That night he drank heavily and was apprehended, scarcely knowing that was happening to him, and having but two second-hand pistols hardly worth carrying. He was executed some three weeks later, on Monday, November 16th, 1724, in the twenty-third year of his age, dying "with great difficulty, and much pitied by the mob." His body was buried the same evening in St. Martin's churchyard.

It is the simplicity of this pocket edition of the *Calendar* which enchants me. "I went to work, taking off just my handcuffs," writes the boy. "No trace of the ancient slavery disgraced him save the iron anklets which clung about his legs," says the more ornate Mr. Whibley. "I was once more a free man," is Sheppard's account of his sensations on realising that he was clear of the turner's house; adding the above-mentioned pardonable allusion to the astonishment of mankind. Whereas our essayist makes him deliver his bosom thus: "Am I not the most accomplished slip-string the world has known? The broken wall of every round-house in town attests my bravery. Light-limbed though I be, have I not forced the impregnable castle itself? And my enemies—are they not to-day writhing in distress? The head of Blueskin, that pitiful thief, quivers in the noose; and Jonathan Wild bleeds at the throat from the dregs of a coward's courage. What a triumph shall be mine

A Handful of Rogues

when the keeper finds the stronghold tenantless ! ”

Jack says simply that with part of his plunder he turned himself into a “perfect gentleman.” Our essayist is more particular. “He was dressed in a superb suit of black; a diamond fawney flashed upon his finger; his light tie-periwig was worth no less than seven pounds; pistols, tortoise-shell snuff-boxes, and golden guineas jostled one another in his pockets. Thus, in brazen magnificence, etc., etc.” Both ways of writing have their charm, but for me it is the felon who is the stylist. Nothing in Mr. Whibley’s account can compare for dramatic tension with the hesitancies and procrastinations of the gentleman who could not take his leave. Mr. Whibley prefers the version that Jack must kick his heels upon the leads till the maid should be “silenced in sleep.” It was through her “winking casement” that his road to freedom lay. Jack has nothing so ornate; his tale is of an empty garret and a party in a parlour all chattering and, we may be sure, heartily damned by the impatient youth. Yet from both narrations we get an impression of Jack’s *naïveté*, and something approaching loveliness. I have not read Harrison Ainsworth since I was a boy, and forget exactly how romantic he made his hero; probably he subdued the Hogarthian colouring of Jack’s two infamous doxies, Edgeworth Bess and Poll Maggot. But Ainsworth cannot have made a more seductive figure of the young man than does my pocket calendar.

White Horse and Red Lion

It is a good thing after you have sufficiently admired Constable's Salisbury Cathedral—which is not so much a view of that edifice, as a picture of the painter as affected by spire, rainbow, foliage, pond and ducks, or whatever there may be in the foreground—it is a good thing to take a trip to Salisbury and look at the cathedral for yourself. When I was in camp at Codford St. Mary I made frequent visits to the town, and never once saw the cathedral take on Constable's mood. It is useful to have another account of Jonathan Wild and see how far that Great Man took on Fielding's mood. Fielding's portrait of Wild is monstrosity so patently idealised that we want to know exactly how big was the scoundrel upon whom the figure of the Great Man was erected. Well, this little book gives his measure. He was a great organiser—a Warwick, a Napoleon of the code, a Northcliffe. Born under other skies he would have been Pope; it is mere chance that he was Arch-prig and not Archbishop. In our time he could have filled the shoes of Sir William Robertson or Mr. Gordon Selfridge; in the world of showmanship, he would have rivalled Mr. Cochran; in that of the Hackney he might have aspired to be an Alexander Gemmell. Nature endorsed Wild with genius—and genius is genius whether in trade or deal, horse-coping or shop-lifting. The little calendar does not pretend to Fielding's brilliant invention; there is nothing to match Tishy's visit to her lord on the eve of execution, desiring to ask once more, "Pray, Mr. Wild, why b——ch?" Over against this we

A Handful of Rogues

must set the more faithful account of the laudanum which Wild took to cheat the gallows. Says Fielding: "Laudanum, therefore, being unable to stop the breath of our hero, which the fruit of hempseed, and not the spirit of poppy-seed, was to overcome, he was at the usual hour attended by the proper gentleman appointed for that purpose, and acquainted that the cart was ready. On this occasion he exerted that greatness of courage which hath been so much celebrated in other heroes; and, knowing it was impossible to resist, he gravely declared he would attend them." Wild then shakes hands with those who were to conduct him to the Tree, pledges their healths in a bumper of brandy, and drives off to the acclamations of the multitude.

Now consider the greater verisimilitude of the *Calendar*. "After taking the liquid laudanum, he grew so drowsy that he could not hold up his head, nor keep open his eyes at prayers. Two of his fellow-prisoners, perceiving his disorder, endeavoured to rouse him. They took him by the arms, and persuaded him to stand up and walk a little, which, as he was lame of the gout, he could not do without their assistance. This motion awakened him a little, and then his countenance turned very pale, he sweated violently, and grew exceedingly sick; soon after he vomited till he had thrown up the greater part of the laudanum. After this he recovered a little, but still was very drowsy, and almost insensible of what he said or did, and in this condition he was put into the

White Horse and Red Lion

cart, and conveyed to Tyburn." One passage is great art; the other is truth. There is room surely, for both. In the case of Buckingham I want to know how Shakespeare would have a brave man die; in the matter of a malefactor, I want to know whether he possessed the one essential quality of ill-doing—courage. On this point the *Calendar* is not of much help. I judge from it that Wild was perhaps not an arrant coward, but also that he was not one of the temper to spend his last earthly minute in picking a last pocket. That Wild made his entry into the next world carrying the parson's bottle-screw in his hand is a glorious flourish of Fielding's inventive genius, but no more. Wild's execution followed within twenty-seven weeks of Sheppard's, to whose glory it is that he never made friends with the thief-taker, or damned his mother's eyes.

But there are nights when I am not in the mood for Jonathan's subtleties. It is on these that I turn to the adventures of Gilbert Langley and William Gadesby. Langley, the son of a London goldsmith, was sent at the age of three to "the seat of his grandfather in Derbyshire." At seven he was "entered in the school of the Charter-house, where he soon became a tolerably good scholar." Whence we may deduce that Langley was, as they say, well-connected. He appears to have led a youth of such liveliness that, in the opinion of his friends, only marriage could reclaim him. In deference to their views, he espoused a Miss Brown, a young lady whose fortune enabled him to get credit for large

A Handful of Rogues

amounts of jewellery and cash. With these and his wife he decamped to Holland, whilst at home his creditors made him bankrupt. And now Mrs. Langley drops out of the story. Alone her husband sails to Barbadoes, whence, once more head over ears in debt, he makes for Port Royal in Jamaica. There he embarks as a midshipman on board an English man-of-war, and reaches London once more. Sojourns in the Poultry Compter, Newgate, and a sponging-house follow in quick succession; Langley conceives an attachment for a woman of ill-fame, and attempts to hang himself, but the rope breaks. He now tries honest work as a colour-grinder, which labour so disgusts him that he contracts with the captain of a Jamaica ship, who agrees to take him to that island on the condition of selling him as a slave. Langley is, in fact, sold on arrival to a Colonel Hill, as tutor to his children. He runs away, boards a ship for England, is impressed on arrival, put on board a man-of-war, and carried round to Plymouth. He deserts, tries residence in a twopenny lodging, and again contracts with a crimp, this time to go as slave to Pennsylvania. He escapes, and we next find him at Lisbon, and after that at Malaya in Spain. Here he becomes converted to the Roman Catholic religion, enters a convent, and is recommended as a page to a Spanish lady of distinction. Follows the inevitable affair of gallantry with his mistress's niece, upon discovery of which Langley gets out of window, takes shelter with an Irish tailor, and then ship to Gibraltar. There he finds

White Horse and Red Lion

employment as waiter in the tennis court belonging to the garrison, but this does not last long. Adventures in Barbary, Santa Cruz, Oratava, Genoa, and Cadiz follow, until at length Langley finds a way to make yet another return home. In possession of a certain amount of means, he tries to find his wife, whose mother will not reveal her daughter's whereabouts. Upon this Langley "gives himself up to despair," and dissipates the whole of his fortune. Making acquaintance of one Hill, a young fellow similarly circumstanced, they agree to go to Paris, and set out to walk to Dover. An embargo being laid on all vessels in that port, they begin their return walk, and, destitute of cash, demand a man's money on the highway, and take from him the sum of three farthings. For this they are capitally convicted, but the sentence is changed to one of transportation for seven years. Langley is transported in the month of December, 1740, being still a comparatively young man, and neither the polite nor the impolite world knows him more. Through the bold outline of this story I detect, faintly, the gentleman. Many a night have I fallen asleep pondering, not on the map of Gilbert Langley's peregrinations, but of his thoughts. What were they? Had he any? Or was he a Casanova mute and unreflecting? Would he, on return from one of his farings, have been able to present a vision of anything he had beheld. Or I have lain awake wondering what happened to him at the end of those seven years? Perchance his fate resembled that of George Barrington,

A Handful of Rogues

Prig of Genius, High Constable of Paramatta,
and author of the immortal line:—

“ We left our country for our country’s good.”

Perhaps Langley also turned prig-catcher ? Such an end would have been happy, characteristic and in a double sense Gilbertian.

William Gadesby was a horse of another colour. In the minds of the unimaginative and those who know neither life nor the Sunday newspaper, Gadesby’s crimes exceed probability. The narrative, says Cavendish, is taken from the condemned man’s own handwriting, with corrections only of spelling and of grossly vulgar provincial idioms and expressions. (J’ever see such meddlers as the tribe of Bowdler ? I must now take up many hours with firking and ferreting at the British Museum and the Record Office for that which I could have read so much more conveniently and familiarly under the eiderdown.)

I shall only glance at the story here ; in the mixture of callousness and a queer sensibility its protagonist would seem to be without rival. “ I was apprehended,” he writes, “ at Stafford for picking a man’s pocket of nine guineas, and stood my trial but did not get off without being publicly whipped.” That is a good beginning. Five weeks later “ I robbed a man of fifteen guineas, and stood my trial before Judge Buller, but got clear. Being too well known at Birmingham, I remained there but four weeks, during which

White Horse and Red Lion

time I drew up with a woman, and we cohabited as man and wife. I left her and took the road to Bath. I passed my time at Newmarket among the girls of the place, and for a month appeared in the habit of a gentleman, but got many a beating." Gadesby spent the following winter in Bath, having such good luck at cards that he did not need to steal except for fun. Here he became engaged to a young lady who unfortunately discovered a letter written to her lover by a crony in Exeter jail. "I then thought my character would be blasted at Bath, and I resolved to leave it; but before I did leave it, I committed the vilest action of my life, which I think the greatest sin I have to answer for to God, and for which I feel the greatest affliction. I found means to request the young lady to meet me. This she complied with. I tied my horse to the gate, and talked with her for some time; and endeavoured to reconcile matters, but to no purpose. I then treated her very ill, mounted my horse, took the road for Birmingham, and never after heard of, or saw her." The blood runs cold at the thought of what a man with Gadesby's capacity for lashes would consider treating a defenceless woman "very ill."

After a period of persistent if undistinguished evildoing, Gadesby enlisted in March, 1784, in the 7th Royal English Fusiliers. "I joined the regiment at Gloucester, and behaved myself very well for some months." In the following February he deserted, and a few weeks later enlisted in the Dragoons, drawing three guineas bounty-money.

A Handful of Rogues

“ I joined the regiment at Stamford, and behaved myself well for some weeks.” In Italy he again deserted, and got safely to Birmingham. “ Having little money, I began to try my hand at thieving again. . . . Making further inquiry after my late mistress, I found she was doing extremely well. When she saw me she fainted; for, as she afterwards said, she had heard that I had been hanged at Nottingham for coining. I stopped here all night, and when in bed, she begged me to give her the history of my last travels, which I faithfully did. She pitied my situation very much, and begged me to stay with her and travel no more. I promised to do so, and next day she clothed me extremely well, and gave me a gold watch. She never wanted money, for she had then ten of the finest girls in the place in her house. I went about more like a gentleman than the bully of a bawdy house, and was known at this time by the name of John Brown, Esq. I staid two months with this woman, after which she was seized with a sudden fit of illness, and died. I gave her a decent burial, and ordered the girls to leave the house. I sold all the goods, and paid the landlord the house-rent, after which I had about £12.”

In November Gadesby was arrested for deserting from the Fusiliers and tried by court-martial at Plymouth. “ Being a likely young man, the major was not for punishing me, and I was only confined to the black hole for five days. After this I behaved myself well, and was always reckoned a good, clean soldier, and gained the good opinion both of

White Horse and Red Lion

the soldiers and officers of the regiment. I took up with a woman here, and lived with her as my wife, and she kept me in pocket-money and everything I wanted."

Gadesby was then detailed for guard on board a Dutch vessel that had gone ashore, to prevent the country-people plundering her. When he was on duty he sold whatever he could of the goods under his charge, and returned to barracks the richer by twenty-four guineas and some valuables. He now persuaded his doxy to sell up her household goods and furniture. This she did, having, after all debts were paid, the sum of fourteen pounds. This kept Gadesby in drink for a considerable time, and when it was all gone he forced the woman to sell her clothes. "When I found that I had got all that she had, and there was nothing more to expect, I turned her off, when we marched from Plymouth on the twenty-fifth of April, 1786." The regiment was bound for Scotland. "We arrived at Bath upon a Saturday, and were to halt all next day. In the house where I was billeted, I made a conquest of the maid-servant, and we slept together. She was determined to go with me and be married, but her friends interposed. Indeed I only intended to have carried her on as long as her money and clothes lasted."

And so the recital goes on, an interminable succession of thefts and seductions. At Dundee Gadesby was sentenced to 800 lashes for selling wearing apparel, but received only 250. This

A Handful of Rogues

punishment did not cure him, for no sooner was he recovered than he picked a gentleman's pocket. Next he paid his addresses to a decent servant girl, who would have none of him. "It was well for her," reflects the scoundrel, "for I would have been her ruin." He goes on: "I lived, however, with another woman as my wife, and left her when the regiment marched for Fort George. I behaved myself well there for twenty weeks. But one night I went to Campbeltown, and stole some ducks, for which I received no payment but 200 lashes; and I was very ill after this punishment." In May, 1786, the fellow got acquainted with Margaret Hamilton, "whom I afterwards married, and constantly adhered to since." The poor woman naturally became partner and accomplice in Gadesby's crimes, and the pair were in and out of prison with unfailing regularity, the husband returning to soldiering whensoever it pleased him. In 1790, on the outbreak of war, and the regiment being ordered for Gibraltar, finding that his wife would not be allowed to go with him Gadesby deserted for the last time, and retired to Edinburgh, where he committed a series of burglaries. At midnight, on the 9th of August, a round-up by the police of all suspicious persons was carried out, and Gadesby was seized by a "very active and intelligent gentleman, belonging to the council chamber, who went out to see what was passing in the streets, till the constables should return from their duty." An accomplice turned king's evidence, and Gadesby was condemned to death.

White Horse and Red Lion

The night immediately preceding the day appointed for his execution, Gadesby wrote out a confession of his being concerned in the robbery of a Dundee bank, for which two men had been already executed, and named his accomplices. This confession was handed to the Lord Provost in the morning. All the preparations for the ceremony were complete, an immense concourse of spectators was in attendance. When the hour struck, Gadesby said he was ready, and wished to die. Then came a halt. Three-quarters of an hour later, a respite was intimated, whereat Gadesby expressed dissatisfaction. Unable, subsequently, to pick out the people whom he had named as his accomplices, he was executed on Wednesday, the 22nd of February, 1791.

An extraordinary scoundrel, and we must believe an attractive one. There is something convincing about his "I behaved myself well for such and such a period," which recurs in the narrative at least a score of times. Perhaps he was "nobody's enemy but his own!" To judge by his success with women, he must have been a fine-looking animal, and his endurance of a trifle of 250 lashes points to stamina and physique. About both Langley and Gadesby there is a certain charm; in the one case of the rolling sea, in the other of the open road. They were fresh-air fellows both, with whom you could have touched glasses. Contemplating them, the mind is not tainted with any of that queasy nonsense about the artist as poisoner. These were vital rogues, not decadent cheats.

A Handful of Rogues

To crowd into a few meagre sheets all the excellences of these five hundred pages of small print is impossible. Regretfully I pass over George Barrington, that admirable actor both of street and stage, whose performance in *The Beggar's Opera* was greatly admired; Henry Cook, who, when the warrant for his execution arrived, was so struck with the idea of his approaching fate that he "fell into convulsive fits and never afterwards recovered his health"; Captain Hind, who, knowing that within the hour his quarters would be set upon the gates of Worcester City, there to remain till they were destroyed by wind and weather, could yet make a political speech and declare his robberies to have been committed solely upon the Cromwellian faction, of whose principles he professed abhorrence. Before my paper runs out I would, to copy Jack, satisfy the curious and do justice to the ignorant in the matter of Thurtell, Hunt, and Probert. The names read like a respectable firm of solicitors; curiously enough, whilst Thurtell was a villain, Hunt was merely weak and Probert a fool.

As a boy I was familiar with an old jingle which, since I have not seen it in print for many years, I shall make bold to repeat here. It is a model of conciseness, and runs:—

They slit his throat from ear to ear,
His brains they battered in;
His name was Mr. William Weare,
He came from Lyon's Inn.

White Horse and Red Lion

It was for the murder of William Weare that John Thurtell, Joseph Hunt, and the man Probert were indicted, almost exactly one hundred years ago. I must ask my readers to believe that the excitement in the little country town of Hereford on the morning of January 7th, 1824, was such as Mr. James Douglas, if he had been practising at that date, would have enthusiastically described. The plain facts of the murder are as follows:—

William Weare, addicted to play and connected with gaming houses, having cheated John Thurtell of a large sum of money, the latter was determined upon revenge. On the morning of Friday, the 24th of October, 1823, John Thurtell, sallying forth from the Coach and Horses in Conduit Street, where he was in temporary concealment owing to some undisclosed charge of misdemeanour, and accompanied by Hunt, a public singer, visited a pawnbroker's in Marylebone and purchased a pair of pocket-pistols. At noon Hunt hired a horse and gig under pretence of going to Dartford in Kent, and made inquiries as to where he could purchase a sack and a rope. He was directed to a place over Westminster Bridge which, he was told, was on his way to Kent. He procured these things, however, at another place, and returned to the inn in Conduit Street. There, the prosecution alleged, Hunt was overheard to ask Probert whether he would be in at what they, Thurtell and Hunt, were about. Counsel stated that Thurtell drove off from the Coach and Horses between four and five o'clock, to take up a friend, as he said to

A Handful of Rogues

Probert, "to be killed as he travelled with him," which expression Probert said he believed at the time to be a piece of idle bravado. Probert's evidence elaborated all this. He had been a spirit-dealer, he said, and rented a cottage in Gill's Hill Lane, which left the high road to St. Albans at Radlett. The cottage was a quarter of a mile from the high road, and fourteen miles and a quarter from Tyburn turnpike. John Thurtell had often been down to his cottage on sporting visits, and knew the roads and neighbourhood well. He owed Thurtell £10, and Thurtell was pressing for the money. At the Coach and Horses on the afternoon of October 24th, John Thurtell said to him, "I think I shall go down to your cottage to-night, are you going down?" He then asked him if he would drive Hunt down. Probert said, "Yes." Thurtell said, "I expect a friend to meet me this evening a little after five, and if he comes I shall go down. If I have an opportunity I mean to do him, for he is a man that has robbed me of several hundreds." Thurtell then added, "I have told Hunt where to stop. I shall want him about a mile and a half beyond Elstree. If I should not go down, give Hunt a pound." At this point Hunt came in, and Probert gave him twenty shillings. Thurtell said, "There, Joe, there's a pound; if Probert don't come, hire a horse, you know where to stop for me." Thurtell left the Coach and Horses almost immediately in a horse and chaise. It was a grey horse, and Probert believed that the horse and chaise were brought

White Horse and Red Lion

by Hunt. It was a little after five when Thurtell left.

The prosecution proved that Thurtell was seen in the course of that evening in a gig, with a horse of a very remarkable colour. He was "a sort of iron grey, with a white face and white legs—very particular marks for identity. He was first seen by a patrol near Edgware; beyond that part of the road he was seen by the landlord; but from that time of the evening until his arrival at Probert's cottage on the same night, they had no direct evidence to trace him." The calendar is a little vague here. Who is it who was seen by the patrol near Edgware—the man or the horse? Who is the landlord? Note also that there is no mention of a second party being in the gig, and we must believe that Weare was with Thurtell.

Again Probert is more particular. He says: "I afterwards set off to go in my own gig; I took Hunt with me. When I came to the middle of Oxford Street, Hunt got out of the gig to purchase a loin of pork, by my request, for supper. When we came to the top of Oxford Street, Hunt said, 'This is the place Jack is to take up his friend at.' In our way down we overtook Thurtell, about four miles from London. Hunt said to me, 'There they are; drive by, and take no notice.' He added, 'It's all right; Jack has got him.' There were two persons in the gig—Thurtell and another; I passed them and said nothing. I stopped at a public-house called the Bold-faced Stag, about seven miles from London, two miles short of

A Handful of Rogues

Edgware. It was then, perhaps, a quarter to seven. When Hunt said, 'It's all right,' I asked him what was his name? Hunt replied, 'You are not to know his name; you never saw him; you know nothing of him.' I got out at the Bold-faced Stag; I supplied the house with spirits. Hunt walked on, and said, 'I'll not go in, because I have not returned the horse-cloths I borrowed.' I stopped about twenty minutes; I then drove on, and overtook Hunt about a quarter of a mile from Edgware. I took him up, and we drove to Mr. Clarke's, at Edgware. We had a glass of brandy and water. I should think we did not stop ten minutes; we went into the bar. We stopped a little further in Edgware; and bought half a bushel of corn; I was out of corn at home; I put it in the gig. Hunt then said, 'I wonder where Thurtell is, he can't have passed us.' We then drove on to the Artichoke, kept by Mr. Field. We got there within about eight minutes of eight. Neither I nor Hunt got out. We had four or five glasses of brandy and water, waiting for the express purpose of Thurtell coming up; we thought we heard a horse and chaise, and started; I think we stopped more than three-quarters of an hour at Elstree. We went about a mile and a half to Mr. Phillimore's lodge, to wait for Thurtell. Hunt said, 'I shall wait here for John Thurtell,' and he got out on the road. I drove on through Radlett, towards my own cottage; when I came near my own cottage, within about a hundred yards, I met John Thurtell; he was on foot; he says, 'Hallo,

White Horse and Red Lion

where's Hunt?' I said I had left him waiting near Phillimore's lodge for him; John Thurtell said to that, 'Oh, I don't want him now, for I have done the trick;' he said he had killed his friend that he had brought down with him; he had ridded the country of a villain, who had robbed him of three or four hundred pounds. I said, 'Good God! I hope you have not killed the man!' and he said, 'It's of no consequence to you, you don't know him, nor you never saw him; do you go back and fetch Hunt, you know best where you left him.' I returned to the place where I left Hunt, and found him near the spot where I left him. Thurtell did not go. I said to Hunt, when I took him up, 'John Thurtell is at my house—he has killed his friend'; and Hunt said, 'Thank God, I am out of it; I am glad he has done it without me; I can't think where the devil he could pass; I never saw him pass anywhere, but I'm glad I'm out of it.' He said, 'This is the place we was to have done it' (meaning near Phillimore's lodge); I asked him who the man was, and he said, 'You don't know him, and I shall not tell you'; he said it was a man that had robbed Jack of several hundred pounds, and they meant to have it back again; by that time I had reached my own house; John Thurtel stood at the gate; we drove into the yard; Hunt says, 'Thurtell, where could you pass me?' Thurtell replied, 'It don't matter where I passed you, I've done the trick—I have done it'; Thurtell said, 'What the devil did you let Probert stop drinking

A Handful of Rogues

at his d——d public-house for, when you knew what was to be done?' Hunt said, 'I made sure you were behind or else we should not have stopped'; I then took the loin of pork into the kitchen and gave it to the servant to cook for supper. I then went into the parlour and introduced Hunt to Mrs. Probert; he had never been there before."

The oftener I read this recital, the more its fascination grows upon me. What means did Thurtell use to induce Weare who, conscious of the old score, must have suspected the other's enmity, to accompany him in his gig? Probably, to judge by Weare's kit, a sporting invitation. Hunt, says the prosecution, was known to Weare, but not, as he believed, "in habits of friendship." Therefore it would not appear strange to Weare that Hunt should pass him on the road without so much as raising his whip. Also Hunt was disguised by means of long, bushy whiskers. At what point in the journey did Weare first begin to suspect Thurtell's evil design? Probably, I think, not until the latter placed the pistol to his cheek. But the most curious thing about the story is the insistence with which Hunt returns to the question as to where and when Thurtell passed him, to which Thurtell will give no reply. It must, one thinks, have been either at Mr. Clarke's, at Edgware, where Hunt and Probert went into the bar for nearly ten minutes, or at the corn-factor's. The point is immaterial, yet Hunt sticks to it with strange persistence. Possibly Hunt was afraid of Thurtell, and wanted to find an excuse

White Horse and Red Lion

for not having been on hand. The recital has truth stamped all over it ; the touch about the borrowed horse-cloths is beyond invention.

Probert then told his wife that they were all going to Mr. Nicholson's to get leave for a day's shooting ; but their real object was to go down to the place where the body of Weare was deposited. According to Probert, Thurtell carried a sack and cord, Probert a lantern. As they went along the lane Probert walked in front. Thurtell said, "Probert, he is just beyond the second turning." When they came to the second turning Thurtell said, "It's a little farther on," and, at length, "this is the place." All three looked about for a pistol and knife, but could find neither. They got over the hedge and found the body. Thurtell searched the deceased's pockets, and found a pocket-book containing three five-pound notes, a memorandum book, and some silver. John Thurtell said, "This is all he has got, I took the watch and purse when I killed him." They then put the body into the sack head foremost; the sack came to the knees, and was tied with a cord. They then left the body and went back to Probert's cottage. On the way Thurtell said, "When I first shot him he jumped out of the gig and ran like the devil, singing out that he would deliver all he had if I'd only spare his life. I jumped out of the gig and ran after him ; I got him down, and began to cut his throat, as I thought, close to the jugular vein, but I could not stop his singing out; I then jammed the pistol into his head, I gave it a turn round, and

A Handful of Rogues

then I knew I had done him." (The Watford surgeon called at the trial said that the wound in the temple was an inch and an eighth or a quarter in length, and seven-eighths of an inch in width. He produced the pieces of the skull which had been forced into the wound. Thurtell then remarked to Hunt, "Joe, you ought to have been with me, for I thought at one time he would have got the better of me. These d——d pistols are like spits, they are of no use." Hunt said, "I should have thought one of those pistols would have killed him dead, but you had plenty of tools with you."

The three then returned to the house and supper. After supper Hunt sang two or three songs, Thurtell exhibited Weare's gold watch, and made Mrs. Probert a present of the gold chain. Asked where they would sleep, Thurtell and Hunt said they would share the sofa. After Mrs. Probert and her sister had retired, Thurtell gave Hunt and Probert a five-pound note and a sovereign apiece, saying, "That's your share of the blunt." They then burned Weare's books, papers, and purse, and examined the contents of his carpet bag, which included wearing apparel, shooting materials, and a backgammon board containing dice and cards. During all this time Mrs. Probert was becoming uneasy. She did not go to bed, but after a time went to the window and looked out, and saw Probert, Hunt, and Thurtell in the garden. Prior to this Thurtell and Hunt had already been down to the body, but had found it too heavy to move.

White Horse and Red Lion

They returned to the cottage, and Mrs. Probert saw them take out Thurtell's horse. Thurtell and Probert went down to the lane and brought the body back on the horse. Hunt took the animal to the stables and the other two dragged the body down the garden to a pond. They put stones in the sack, and threw the body into the pond. The man's feet were perhaps half a foot above the water, so Thurtell got a cord, threw it round the feet, and made Probert drag the body into the centre of the pond, where it sank. Next morning, Hunt and Thurtell were out early, and some farm-hands saw them "grabbing" for something in the hedge. They explained that their gig had been nearly upset there the previous evening, and after some talk went away. The farm-hands, searching for something that they supposed might have fallen out of the gig, came upon the knife and pistol, both covered with blood.

Probert becoming nervous and insisting that the body should be removed from his pond, on the following Monday evening Thurtell and Hunt came down to the cottage. Hunt engaged Mrs. Probert in conversation, the others took the body out of the pond, put it into Thurtell's gig, and then Thurtell and Hunt drove away. They carried the body a considerable distance from Probert's cottage, and sunk it in a pond near Elstree. The murder had now become bruited about ; only the body could not be found. Weare's gun, travelling-bag, and backgammon-board were found at Hunt's lodgings. A penknife which was

A Handful of Rogues

positively sworn to as having belonged to Weare was found in Thurtell's pocket, and also the fellow-pistol to the one which was found on the scene of the murder. Both men were arrested, and on the strength of a half-promise by the magistrates of being admitted as an evidence, Hunt disclosed where the body was to be found.

Thurtell, at the trial, put up a most impressive defence, and rolled out his periods like a man of letters. It is possible that Dickens used Thurtell's speech as a model for that of Sergeant Buzfuz. Dickens was twelve years old at the time of the trial, and as a singularly observant boy must have read the sheets of the period. "I have been held forth to the world," said Thurtell in the best forensic manner, "as a depraved, heartless, remorseless, prayerless villain, who had seduced my friend into a sequestered path, merely in order to despatch him into greater security—as a snake who had crept into his bosom only to strike a sure blow—as a monster who, after the perpetration of a deed from which the hardest heart recoils with horror, and at which humanity stands aghast, washed away the remembrance of my guilt in the midst of riot and debauchery." Is not the simile of the snake in the Sergeant's best vein? Thurtell at once proceeds to flatter the jury. "You, gentlemen, must have read the details which have been daily, I may say hourly, published regarding me. It would be requiring more than the usual virtue of our nature to expect that you should entirely divest your minds of those feelings, I may say those creditable feelings,

White Horse and Red Lion

which such relations must have excited; but I am satisfied that as far as it is possible for men to enter into a grave investigation with minds unbiased, and judgments unimpaired, after the calumnies with which the public mind has been deluged—I say, I am satisfied, that with such minds and judgments, you have this day assumed your sacred office.” Admirable! A kind, affectionate, and religious mother, Thurtell declared, directed the tender steps of his infancy in the paths of virtue. His rising youth was guided by a father whose piety was universally known. After leaving the paternal roof he entered the service of that late revered monarch who had been justly styled the “father of his people.” He had never tarnished the lustre of his country’s colours; he had fought for her, bled for her, and had not feared to shed in the open field the blood of her foes. . . . If he had been a gambler, then half the nobility in the land had been his examples, some of the most enlightened statesmen had been his companions. He bade them beware of an anticipated verdict. No man becomes wicked all at once, and therefore he should lay before them his whole career, leaving it to their clemency to supply such defects as they might observe. No pen, “though dipped in hues of heaven,” could portray his feelings at this crisis. He had taken the commercial world as though it had been an army, had treated merchants as if they had been mess-companions. Naturally he became the subject of a commission in bankruptcy. He obtained the

A Handful of Rogues

signature of all his creditors to a petition for superseding his bankruptcy. But just when he flattered himself that his ill-fortune was about to close, that his blossoms were ripening, then came a frost, "a nipping frost." His chief creditor refused to sign unless he was paid a bonus of £300 beyond all the other creditors. His solicitor backed this offer, spurning which he was thrown upon the world. He had been implicated in an action for conspiracy in connection with the firing of his brother's warehouses, though the accidental nature of the combustion had been proved at a trial at which the venerable judge now present presided. . . . He trusted his language was not immoderate. But

"The flesh will quiver where the pincers tear,
The blood will follow where the knife is driven."

He had been charged with decoying another man to his destruction. He could prove that he was in another town at the time, but for the sake of an amiable and innocent female who might be injured, he forbore. The press, which ought to be the shield of public liberty, had heaped slander upon slander, and whetted the public appetite for slanders more atrocious; what in other men would serve to refute and repel the shaft of calumny was made to stain with a deeper dye the villainies ascribed to him. They, the gentlemen of the jury, had been told that after the battle he boasted of his inhumanity to a vanquished, yielding, wounded

White Horse and Red Lion

enemy, that he made a wanton sacrifice of his bleeding and supplicating foe by striking him to earth with cowardly steel, and that after this deed of blood he sat coldly down to plunder his unhappy victim. Was there an English officer, an English soldier, an Englishman whose heart would not have revolted against such baseness and folly? Had he not better fallen stemming and opposing the tide of battle upon the field of his country's glory? His particular gratitude was due to the chaplain of the prison. Let him not forget the fatherly treatment accorded him by the prison-governor. His memory must perish ere he could forget such kindness; his heart must be cold ere it could cease to beat with gratitude to him, and wishes for the prosperity of his family. (Here the prisoner shed tears, and the court was moved to a degree of emotion "altogether indescribable." There were no Sunday papers in those days.)

Thurtell then reviewed the evidence at length, suggested that the murder was committed by Hunt and Probert, and cited a number of cases of men who had been hanged for crimes to which, afterwards, others had confessed. He implored the jury not to cut him off in the midst of his days. There was not one, he thought, in the court who did not deem him innocent of the charge. If there were, then to him or them he would say in the language of the apostle: "Would to God ye were altogether such as I am, save these bonds."

The speech must have taken some considerable time to deliver, and the manner in which Thurtell

A Handful of Rogues

turned the evidence away from himself and upon his accomplices suggests a very acute and lively intelligence. Thurtell was found guilty and sentenced to death, the execution taking place on the next day but one. Hunt pleaded that but for his help in the discovery of the body, there could have been no trial, and suggested that, in all fairness, so far as he was concerned, the body should be considered as undiscovered. He, too, was found guilty and sentenced to death, but the sentence was afterwards commuted, and he was sent to New South Wales for life.

Probert was acquitted without giving evidence.

But he did not enjoy long respite, being hanged for horse-stealing in the following year in company with two others convicted of the same crime, and a burglar. Robert Surtees witnessed the execution, an account of which was recently found among papers left by him. It concludes: "The drop suddenly fell, and a thrill ran through the crowd as those four white-covered heads assumed the same sideway attitude as they were launched into eternity."

A Great Man and Some Horses

A Great Man and Some Horses

So many Great Men, so many definitions. My own has nothing to do with altering the face of the world ; it is concerned, rather, with the face of the actor who should be able to impersonate a Great Man. None of this kidney was ever thin ; nor, to my way of belief, can ever hatchet-faced ascetic have been truly great. Alexander Gemmell, humanist and horse-breeder, is a Great Man. His character, curiously mis-labelled "Falstaff," was drawn by Hazlitt, if not by a greater before him ; his figure is shown in Hogarth's *Simon Fraser, Earl Lovat* ; his features are those of the bust of Colley Cibber in the National Portrait Gallery. In a word, Gemmell is an Old Master. Coquelin, and Coquelin alone, had the mask like a full moon to do my friend justice ; none but Salvini possessed the temperament.

He who has heard Alexander Gemmell uphold the Hackney towards midnight in broad Scots and a hotel smoke-room, his bald, egg-shaped head lustrous and shining, his jowl crimson with good cheer, his sagging paunch borne upon legs sturdy as pilasters, his whole body seismic with the frenzy of tumbling images—whoever has listened to Alexander Gemmell in such an hour knows what great oratory may be. I regard an impromptu harangue delivered by him in the lounge of the Danum Hotel at Doncaster after the Hackney

White Horse and Red Lion

Show of 1922 as the greatest example of virtuosity I have known. Sargent's paint, Rosenthal's execution of Liszt's *12th Hungarian Rhapsody*, Covey's back-hand force for the dedans, fade to nothing in comparison. The speech contained a magnificent passage about Arthur Fewson's Ladybird by Lord Derby II., out of a Foundation mare. This exquisite bay-brown possessed the sweetness and quality which only Lord Derby II. could give to the female line of the breed. Her action was not like the artificial action of to-day. It was perfectly natural and perfectly straight, well-balanced, and, as horse-men say, "plenty of it"; but so regular was it in movement that, apart from the show-ring, the mare could have continued all day on the hard road, and could then have been pulled out to give her best performance. At a small show in Scotland she had been placed second to some common, hulking brute. Said Gemmell:—

"It is now thirty or forty years since I saw Ladybird, the queen of the Scotch show-ring, at Auchtermuchty; and surely never lighted on that turf, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her as she entered the ring, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere in which she had just begun to move; glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters come upon the mare in a nation of gallant men, in a

A Great Man and Some Horses

nation of judges and of horsemen. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge a look that threatened to put her down. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and on that day the glory of the Hackney was extinguished for ever."

Alec spoke for an hour and a quarter, taking for subject himself and his horses. It was not so much a speech as a spate of technical lore, intermingled with the humanities; and it concluded with the toast: Gentlemen, Ah gie ye masel! Gemmell is compounded of Lauder and Mr. Asquith, Micawber and Dr. Johnson, with just a touch of Old Mel. An eminent lawyer, he gave up the law for the Hackney. Circumstances were in provident mood for once, or they would have made him Lord Advocate of Scotland, and so wasted a Great Man. "I often think," he said to me once, "that if I hadna been so taken up with horses I micht ha' been a puir scribbler masel!"

What an artist in his profession! Being kept waiting *in the kitchen* while some purse-proud Lancashire magnate finished his dinner, did Alec show annoyance? Not a bit of it! He beamed upon vulgarity, and clapped two hundred pounds on to the price of his horse! He will tell you with unction to this day that that wait in the kitchen was one of the most profitable meals he ever enjoyed. A second meal was at my expense. In the year after the war Alec sold me a gelding after pointing out that it had a curb! That is to say, I put my hand

White Horse and Red Lion

on the near hock, and Alec declared at once that if the horse had been sound he would not have sold him for all the money in England. The way of the deal was this. I had gone down to the farm on a visit of inspection and seen all the stock out. Alec possessed nothing, it appeared, between twenty guineas and two thousand pounds, and I wanted a "gaffer" for one-day country shows. And then I noticed that one box had been kept rigorously closed.

"What's in there?" I asked.

"Ye canna buy that chap for all the money in London!" was the answer.

Well, of course, I must have the horse out. He was a bay cob, harness all over, six years old, 14-3½, with great quality, a tremendous front, and the old Lord Derby air which is so seldom met with nowadays. He was by Lord Hamlet out of a mare by Lord Denby II. by Lord Derby II. We put the cob in the wagon, Alec drove, and Galanthus, as he was then called, put up a wonderful show. I made a flying bid of a hundred pounds, and have never seen a man so outraged.

"If ye dinna want to buy the horse, dinna insult him," my friend roared in the voice Salvini was won't to use for 'Wash me in steep-down, liquid gulfs of fire!' "Ye canna hae him for five hundred!"

I went down to the farm again two days later, and the horse put up an even better show. The curb was not sensibly diminished, but neither was

A Great Man and Some Horses

my eagerness to see Galanthus in my own stable. He had a front reaching from Marble Arch to Edgware, and in a harness horse front is everything. £400 was now touched upon by Alec as the kind of sum a man had been known to pay for a likely animal. If I would offer that amount, then perhaps the difference could be split. Two days later we clinched the bargain at £350, after lunch at the Piccadilly Hotel. "And mind ye," said Alec, as I was writing out the cheque, "*he's no' sound!*" Look-at-Me, as I re-named him, won several first prizes, including the Novice 15-hand Class at the Royal Lancashire, and I sold him at the end of the following year, when prices had sunk fifty per cent., for £145. There was no bid for the horse at the sale, but I dropped him five minutes after he came out of the ring. The curb was there after two years of treatment; but I did not guarantee him sound, and he was the sort that a horse-lover will always buy. In the course of our negotiations Alec had, as usual, offered to give me a profit if ever I wanted to sell again—one walks into the trap knowing it to be there. That is the whole genius of Gemmell. Once only during our protracted deal had he given himself away. He had worked up his customary frenzy over the excellence of the animal: to hear him you would have thought this fifteen-hand cob was a last virtuosity of creation, that with him God had exhausted Himself! Finally he wound up a noble panegyric with the phrase: "And mind ye, he's a gr-r-and flat-catcher-r-r!" Thus openly

White Horse and Red Lion

does this supreme fowler set his snare. I heard afterwards that the horse had originally cost him £90, curb and all.

I remember Gemmell's frantic attempts to sell me a pony by Woodlands Eaglet, and my desperate endeavours to avoid a purchase. Two hundred pounds was the price asked. I was to see the gelding in the streets of Ayr at six o'clock in the morning, and I arrived at the stables at half-past five so as to be in at the harnessing and those little matters of the toilet upon which a horse's show so intimately depends. But you've got to get up early if you want to take in Gemmell! He was before me. I found the pony standing in the yard, a rug over his loins: he had been harnessed since five o'clock. Well, we had a show, and the pony was stone-cold, not in the physical but in the figurative sense. He could hardly put one foot before the other, and when he did he put it wrong. I stood on the pavement of the main street in Ayr while Alec drove. Up and down, up and down, tirelessly.

"D'ye see that, mon?" he cried, as he went past, waving his whip. And the less there was to see, the more fervently Alec urged me to look. Finally he worked himself up to a pitch of religious ecstasy, so that great beads of sweat stood upon his brow. When the whole performance had lasted half an hour and we had begun to interfere with the morning traffic, I begged the old boy to desist.

"It's no good," I said. "I'm sorry, Alec, but the pony's useless."

A Great Man and Some Horses

He got down, and at once put off his fervour as Coquelin would put off a part.

"Ye're recht, mon," he said calmly, "he's no worth a damn!"

And over breakfast he asked me whether I thought the little b—— would fetch forty guineas at Crewe. I attended the sale, and it went for thirty-four.

And now let me tell the story of Roderick Dhu, the champion harness horse at the 1913 Richmond Show, with whom my friend was so nearly concerned.

"To the privileged few who saw him in his true form," says a writer in the *Live-Stock Journal*, "the brown gelding, Roderick Dhu, will always stand out as the finest mover in harness in their recollection, while he is probably unique as a harness horse in having changed hands three times in three weeks for four-figure prices. The history of this gelding is romantic. During a visit to Hildenborough to negotiate the hire of Lord Hamlet from Mr. Benjamin Oakes, Mr. R. G. Heaton¹ saw and purchased a brown mare by him out of a County Member dam. Having the greatest possible belief in Lord Derby II. blood (a faith which is justified by results), Mr. Heaton sent this mare, with her two top crosses of the old hero of Holderness, to Mathias, and included her with her resulting foal at foot in his sale in June of the following year (1907). The foal was a colt with fine carriage and sensational action, and he so

¹ One of the finest judges of a harness horse in the world.

White Horse and Red Lion

excited the enthusiasm of those present at the sale that he ran up to 130 guineas before he fell to the bid of Mr. John Kerr of Loudwater. For some reason or other, during the next few years the young horse failed to show his 'connections' a glimpse of his early promise, and he was ultimately sold under the hammer at Crewe for a 'give-away' price to a shrewd-dealing farmer in the locality. At one of these same auctions, two years later, Mr. Gemmell was persuaded to taxi out to see 'a Mathias gelding' which, after he had witnessed it make an electrifying display, and had given it a gruelling trial, he bought for more hundreds than he had cost tens. Two nights later Mr. Gemmell accidentally met Mr. Heaton in Manchester, and was prevailed upon by him to telephone and stop the horse leaving for Ayr, and to go out the following morning and show him. In the result, he was repurchased by his breeder for nearly eight times what he had realised as a foal! A few days later he was bought by Sir Howard Frank, and at the subsequent Olympia show he again changed hands, and was secured by Judge Moore. Though he succeeded in winning first and reserve champion to Queen of Ayr at Richmond, Roderick Dhu was not altogether himself, and the public never got a proper sight of his truly amazing action."

That is the official story.

But this writer cannot have hoped, surely, to do justice in half a dozen lines to the entirely Oriental reversals of fortune which it pleased the

A Great Man and Some Horses

Fates to bestow upon this animal. To say that Roderick Dhu's history is romantic is to say nothing. The truth is that he stepped straight out of the pages of the *Arabian Nights*, that his meteoric brilliance and his plunge into obscurity transcended the believable on these Western shores. His adventures were on a par with those of the Eastern hero of *Kismet*, who, as all the world knows, was a beggar at dawn, king at high noon, and at dusk a beggar again.

I may be forgiven for taking a particular interest in this amazing animal, since I was present at Crewe when the "shrewd-dealing farmer" persuaded Alexander Gemmell to undertake the famous taxi-drive which was to end in this equine phoenix rising from its ashes "for more hundreds than he had cost tens." As "tens" cannot mean less than two, so "hundreds" cannot mean less than three; or a pleasant little profit to the "shrewd-dealing farmer" of 1400 per cent. And here the Fates first step handsomely in. "Two nights later," says our scribe, "Mr. Gemmell accidentally met Mr. Heaton in Manchester, and *was prevailed upon by him* to telephone and stop the horse leaving for Ayr, and to go out the following morning and show him." Now, isn't that simply amazing? There are those who have always imagined the weightier combinations of the show ring to be mysteries of the most intricate and deep-dyed complexion. In our simplicity we have thought that a horse could only rise from a "give-away" price at Crewe to the red rosette at Richmond with

White Horse and Red Lion

the help of more than Machiavellian astuteness and ingenuity. But it appears that nothing of the sort is needed. Fate kindly takes the matter into her own hands, and arranges that the gentleman who is by common consent the finest judge of a show horse in the rough should, two days after a phenomenal purchase, meet by the merest accident the gentleman who is admitted on all hands to be the finest connoisseur of the finished article. What luck for the horse! Mr. Gemmell is "prevailed on" to show him. Again, what luck for Roderick!

Now let me play Landor to these experts: let me imagine the conversation at this accidental meeting. I suppose the talk to run something as follows:—

Mr. H. (descending at the Midland Hotel): You here, Alec? Well, this *is* a surprise!

Mr. G.: I'm not here. I'm on my way back home. Man, I've just bought the most marvellous gelding—and I'll no say he's no by Mathias—that ever set foot in the ring.

Mr. H. (unmoved): You've always bought something of the sort, you know, Alec.

Mr. G.: Mind ye, I've got a stableful up at Ayr that are going to win the championship at Richmond.

Mr. H.: What, all of them?

Mr. G. (with decision): All of them. But this yin can go over the lot.

Mr. H. (as though he had heard this before): I know, I know. (*Carelessly*): Can I see him?

A Great Man and Some Horses

Mr. G. : No. He's already boxed, and I want him home. I'm away back masel' to-morrow.

Mr. H. : Me, too. I'm on my way to town.

Mr. G. : Whaur are ye from ?

Mr. H. (*without thinking*) : Bury St. Edmunds.

Mr. G. : And ye found it convenient to come through Manchester. (*Ponders deeply.*)

Mr. H. : By the merest accident, I assure you. (*Mr. G. still ponders. A pause.*) Have you had dinner ?

Mr. G. : You're very kind !

(*Three hours later.*)

Mr. G. : Did ye no say ye wanted to see the gelding ?

Mr. H. (*recovering the advantage*) : No !

Mr. G. : Man, ye're missing a gran' sicht.

Mr. H. (*subtle*) : I hear the Judge¹ is not coming over this year.

Mr. G. : Foster ² wires twelve hundred, but I'm no seller.

Mr. H. (*playing him*) : Do you know whether the eight-thirty to Euston is a breakfast car ?

Mr. G. (*with intense earnestness*) : Man, if ye're going to prevail on me to show him ye, ye've just the time. I hae him boxed the noo.

¹ Mr. W. H. Moore of New York City, a rich American who used to come over to England and automatically purchase at a " phenomenal " price the Richmond and Olympia champion. To win at these shows, therefore, meant the certainty of a sale to this American gentleman for some thousands of pounds.

² William Foster, a famous English exhibitor of harness ponies.

White Horse and Red Lion

Mr. H. (yawns, but otherwise maintains a magnificent silence) : ———!

Mr. G. : As ye say, we'll telegraph the morn and hae him stopped, etc., etc.

The following day, after much shaking of heads, laying of fingers on lips, confabbing in reserved railway saloons, well-guarded loose-boxes, balloons and other places of comparative privacy, the bargain is struck, and the gelding changes hands at the celebrated four figures. And still the horse's luck holds. A leading amateur takes a still higher four-figure fancy to him ; a retired and famous whip is so enamoured of Roderick that he insists on handling the reins once again, for the occasion. Well do I remember that Richmond show. For a long time the class is headed by three chestnuts—Gaythorn, Gay Boy, and Argo. These the judges shift about interminably, our Roderick standing somewhere about tenth. At last the judges dismiss the chestnuts in favour of King of the Air, a brown, whom they place at the top of the class. Then, looking round for an animal to support him in type, they send for Roderick. The two being sent round together, the gelding's magnificent luck still holds, and the "shrewd-dealing farmer's" wonderful discovery, in the opinion of the two judges, wins. He is immediately sold to Judge Moore, and the play is over.

"He was not altogether himself," says the writer in the *Journal*. My recollection of Roderick Dhu is that he had outline and carriage to

A Great Man and Some Horses

recommend him, and little else. He had no chest, no middle, and no quarters, and he looked as though he hadn't had a feed for a fortnight. He snatched up all four feet like a cat upon hot bricks, and went through immensities of equine cogitation before putting them down again. He walked as delicately as Agag, presuming that gentleman to have had stringhalt. He combined the majesty of Adbolton Black Prince with even greater lethargy. As I came away from the ring, I heard Mr. John Kerr, who had bought the horse when a foal, exclaim: "If they're going to give first prizes to herring-gutted pairs of planks like that brute yonder, it's all up with the Hackney." Then came the meeting for the championship. The judges disagreed. And of course the whole ring-side knew that the issue lay between the magnificent action of Queen of Ayr, going that day as she had never gone before, and the *reputation* of the slow-going, tucked-up "comeback" for doing something altogether sensational on his home-farm. The latter never attained a speed of five miles an hour, though for three yards at a time his action was altogether extraordinary. But shows of three yards never have made, and never will make, a harness champion, and there was Queen of Ayr keeping it up for round after round. Quite rightly the referee awarded the little mare the verdict. I certainly think that if he had not done so the crowd would have lynched him.

And then Roderick Dhu's luck seemed to turn. At Olympia a fortnight later he could get no higher

White Horse and Red Lion

than fourth in his class, and was never within smelling distance of the championship of the flowerbeds. My own impression of Roderick Dhu is that he was the flat-catcher *par excellence*, and just the sort to fetch a phenomenal price on the strength of glimpses of phenomenal action. But I am old-fashioned enough to believe that a show horse must have quality and substance as well as action, and that to be a champion he must possess all three abundantly. Shreds and snippets and glimpses are not good enough. Courage the horse must have, too, and a fair amount of pace; and he must be able to convey the impression of light-hearted gaiety and overwhelming energy. Above all, he must convince the spectator that he is not being *driven*, that on the contrary his driver is at his wits' end to hold him in; whereas Roderick Dhu remains in my mind as the most depressed and depressing animal I have ever seen outside a museum of natural history. He had all the air of a specimen galvanised into temporary life.

I have forgotten who were the judges and the referee on that occasion. Their identity is not of importance, as I do not for a moment raise any question of their perfect sincerity and good faith. I have no hesitation in saying this, and in stating at the same time my firm belief that if the "shrewd-dealing farmer" had entered Roderick Dhu in his own name, without ostentation, the horse would never have got near the top of his class. I believe and maintain that after Richmond he would never have been heard of again. For it is childish to

A Great Man and Some Horses

suppose that judges are not human, or that being human they have no ears. It is equally childish to suppose that they can be unaffected by the whispered rumours of a wonderful horse which is in the habit of changing hands at four figures once a week. People ought not to whisper these things, but they do ; moreover, when a judge is within hearing, they get so excited that their merest whisper becomes a shout. Now it is extremely difficult for judges to go entirely by what they see, and not to be unconsciously prejudiced in favour of an animal ushered into their presence with immense solemnity, heralded with pomp, and trailing clouds of up-country glory. It is almost impossible for judges not to see merit when they have been told that an astounding quantity of that commodity will positively, on the very next Richmond show-day as ever is, sear their startled eyeballs, when it has been whispered in stentorian tones that at least three of the best judges in the land have backed their judgment to four figures. Personally, I venture to think the placing of Roderick Dhu at the top of his class at Richmond the worst piece of judging I have ever seen. I should consider the putting of him down for the championship the best, were it not that it was so obvious.

It is true that the following year Judge Moore brought the horse over to England again, and with him won first and championship at Richmond. But, for all that, in my opinion Roderick Dhu was never a horse. He died in 1915.

White Horse and Red Lion

Alexander Gemmell has had a finger in too many Hackney transactions to feel himself justified in judging at the big shows in this country, where animals which have been through his hands must inevitably come before him. For thirty years almost every champion worthy of the name has known the baptism of Ayr. Such a situation calls for delicacy. I remember judging the harness classes at Worsley with Arthur Fish, a most genial and excellent sportsman, and a capital judge of a horse. In the open class under fifteen hands, the first to come into the ring was Mrs. Putnam's Park Carnation, one of the greatest goers ever foaled. On her day the little mare was earthquake, typhoon, and sand-storm all in one. This was one of her days. There were other exhibits, and then in sailed the gelding, Penwortham Proctor, which Fish had bred. He looked about seventeen hands high, and went like a man-of-war. After a time my colleague said to me slyly, "I think—mind you, I'm not sure—but I rather think I may have bred one of the exhibits in this class. Suppose, old chap, you take it single-handed." I did, and had no doubt whatever about putting Carnation at the top, Proctor always going on his heel and never possessing the best of backs. I have often wondered whether Fish would have interfered if I had shown signs of preferring his old horse. A little later in the afternoon came the fourteen-hand class, and in it appeared William Foster's old Mel Valley's Flare, once champion at Dublin, *alias*, when I had him, King of the Peak, *alias*, in the Blacks'

A Great Man and Some Horses

hands, Moorland King, *alias*, in Messrs. Handforth's ownership, Sundial Flare, known that day, I believe, simply as Flare. I went up to Fish and said, "I dreamed last night that this class would contain a bright bay pony which once belonged to me, and I dreamed also that we called it in first. How would it be, old man, if you took the class single-handed?" And I stood on one side prepared to brain Fish if he did not do my old pony justice. He did, and Flare won.

One recollection calls up another. I remember how this same pony on the morning of one show was sent out of a saddle-class for stringhalt; and how, on being shown in harness in the afternoon, and the judge learning that he belonged to the great exhibitor, William Foster, he was awarded first prize and champion cup. I have reason to remember this as I had the second pony in both classes. I remember Foster, who judged the same show the following year, asking me what I had there. I told him the gelding First Edition, but that I feared his old pony-mare, Mel Valley's Véronique, which was also in the class. "Take it from me," said Foster, "when I've sold a pony, that pony has done winning." And he put Véronique at the bottom. But then she had spavins the size of tangerine oranges, and Foster knew it. A fortnight later, under another judge, First Edition beat Véronique again, both in saddle and harness, thus vindicating Foster's judgment. But the little chestnut mare was a grand pony, and personally I would never have hesitated to put

White Horse and Red Lion

her above First Edition, spavins and all. I shall never forget Véronique at Otley one year, when she came in late. The class was almost judged, and my pony, Talke Princess, was standing at the top. And then the gate opened, and Véronique rushed in like ten thousand fire-engines, with a city ablaze and whole families shrieking from the roofs. Ultimately the judges put her second, a common brute of Foster's first, and Talke Princess third. But Véronique should undoubtedly have won, and whenever she gave that show it was a privilege to stand below her.

But I must wind up this gossip with a return to my theme. Gemmell is one of the fairest judges in the world ; not so much, I believe, out of any peddling notions of honesty—he is too big a man for that—as because of his pride in the acumen, subtlety and artistry of his judgment of a horse. I should have no hesitation in showing in front of Gemmell even if I had failed to repay him a loan of five pounds! And if I must put myself into a man's hands they would be Alec's : if I must measure wits, Gemmell is the last opponent I should choose.

One more picture, and I have done. It was again at Richmond Show, and the open harness class under fifteen hands was being judged. It was a very, hot day, and all the animals were a bit fidgety. In the big class a clumsy brute had got loose, cleared the rails, and dashed among the crowd. Gemmell was driving a black, hot-tempered little mare, black in her heart as well as in her coat.

A Great Man and Some Horses

Her crupper came off and away she went. Gemmell stuck to her as bravely as man might, till at last she slewed round and upset the cart. For a moment the old boy lay still, and we thought he was killed. Slowly he raised his head, but perceiving a St. John's Ambulance man running up with a flask, immediately lowered it. Then, raising himself precariously to a sitting position, he drained the flask, groaned, lay down again, *and sent the man back for more.* He was perfectly unhurt. May my old friend's shadow be above ground for many years to come! I am confident that it will never grow less.

An Old Actor

An Old Actor

TOWARDS the end of February last year I was roused in the middle of the night by a telegram demanding two thousand words on John Philip Kemble by four o'clock on the following afternoon. I had felt it in my bones for some days that this was likely to happen, but had been too lazy to lay in the necessary lore. One of our paragraphists had called attention to the extraordinary fact that three such different people as Pascal, Renan, and John Philip Kemble should be born or die in the '23's. My own thought had been how extraordinary it is that I, who loathe gossip columns more than anything else in the world, should remember of Blaise Pascal nothing beyond the fact that he has given his name to a street in Arles, that he was interested in a scheme for running omnibuses in Paris, was fool enough to wear an amulet and to believe that his little niece was cured of a fistula by a miracle, and that he retired to the Cistercian Abbey of Port Royal, a horse of which name badly let me down in that year's Lincoln Handicap. Of the famous *Provinciales* and *Pensées* nothing, save that rather trite remark about the length of Cleopatra's nose. I do not think that I am likely to know much more of Pascal; how can one take an intelligent interest in a fellow who "explains all the contradictions and difficulties of life by the

White Horse and Red Lion

Fall?" As if mankind had ever known anything but a continual rise! A fall is the fate of altogether meaner things—marks for example. One can't be bothered with the consideration that Pascal had not the advantage of the theory of evolution. Or that if there had been no Pascal there would have been no Darwin. As for this last, I simply don't believe it.

Ernest Renan is chiefly known to me as furnishing the occasion of the most inept sentence to be found in that pedestrious conglomeration, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. "His marriage," writes Madame Duclaux, "brought a rare naturalness and piquancy into his style and a greater attention to the picturesque. . . . He did not forsake his studies in Semitic philology." Must we then contemplate the possibility of Mdlle. Cornélie Scheffer simpering an ultimatum successfully combated: "My dear, you cannot serve two mistresses, me and Semitic philology!" Let us go on to the next paragraph: "The Catholic party, upheld by the empress, would not appoint an unfrocked seminarist, a notorious heretic, to what is, in point of fact, a chair of Biblical exegesis." In point of fact this reads like one of the lighter passages in Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere*. Life, it seems to me, is too short for this kind of thing; and besides, if to a chair of Biblical exegesis you don't appoint an unfrocked heretic whom, in the name of all that's heretical, do you appoint? But the emperor, wishing to conciliate Renan, offered to send him on an archæological mission to Phœnicia.

An Old Actor

Ernest "immediately accepted," and left France, his wife and baby son, in search of material for his *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*. Apparently he ran his Jewish mistress pretty hard. "Dead, he continued to delight his readers," Madame Duclaux concludes. Alive or dead, his biographer fails to delight me.

Pascal and Renan are fish not for my net, but for the more learned mesh of Mr. Edmund Gosse. John Philip Kemble is different. He is, or was, an actor, and it is part of my job to know about actors. But to have a general impression of a player who died one hundred years ago, and to write a detailed memoir of two thousand words are two different matters. You cannot be vague over two columns. As I crumpled up the thin sheet of the telegram, I reflected first that my clearest impression of Kemble was of a pomposity which would lead him not, like Macready, to "ask a blessing" on his Hamlet, but to consider his performance of that rôle a benediction upon others; second, that there would be no time for intellectual revictualling at the British Museum; and third, that what the French are so fond of calling "*un voyage autour de ma chambre*," might not be wholly unfruitful.

That time be not wasted on the next day, I took my writing-pad, which always reposes by my bedside, and with an old golf-jacket thrown round my shoulders and my heels dug in the pallet, began to set down some prefatory matter. First let me say that I deniched from its place in my bookshelves

White Horse and Red Lion

the volume *Kao-Lon* in that cumbersome ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which I bought ever so many years ago in the belief that there were only some thirty-seven copies of the work left, and that it would never, under any circumstances, be reprinted. Why these thirty-seven volumes should be offered at half-price, and no takers, was a problem in book-selling economics which did not present itself to my boyish innocence. At the end of half an hour I had evolved the three following paragraphs:—

John Philip Kemble, the son of two strolling players, Roger Kemble and Sarah Ward, was born at Prescot on February 1, 1757. His eldest sister Sarah, afterwards Mrs. Siddons, was born two years earlier at an inn in the High Street, Brecon; his brother Charles eighteen years later, in 1775, at Brecon. The three make a sum of theatrical and family genius to parallel which we must go to the operatic stage in the persons of Manuel Garcia and his sisters Malibran and Pauline Viardot. Other Kembles there were who made an attempt to share in the family glory. There was brother Stephen, who at Covent Garden as Othello succeeded but moderately. There was Elizabeth, and there was Frances, two sisters, afterwards Mrs. Whitelock and Mrs. Twiss, but who, says a malicious chronicler, "otherwise had no abiding fame." (*This sentence was inserted next day after consultation with Doran.*)

An Old Actor

John Kemble died one hundred years ago—to be exact, on February 20, 1823. In stage matters one hundred years seems an eternity. No one living can have seen Kemble act, and perhaps not very many can remember exactly what their grandfathers said who saw the great tragedian with their own eyes. And yet, considered differently, the gap is not so immense. Pauline Viardot made her first appearance in London in the same year as Rachel, within, if I remember rightly, fourteen years of Kemble's death; and it seems but yesterday that the great Franco-Spanish singer was writing those admirable letters to Turgenev. Kemble, we must think, is not more than a generous lifetime and a half away. And yet how little of him remains! An effigy in Westminster Abbey in the guise of Addison's Cato, begun by Flaxman and completed by Hinchcliff, half-a-dozen pictures and the scribblings of contemporary criticism are all.

Recently I met at dinner one of those young women who take what is called "an intelligent interest" in the theatre. Confessing that she had never seen any of the great actors, she asked me to describe them. "Tell me," she said, "you who have seen them, what they were really like." How could I hope to hit off point-blank Sarah's cry when Marguerite, tottering to the window, beholds the child at play; Pelléas's "Holà! Holà! ho!" and "Moi, moi, et moi!" Jeanne d'Arc's reply to the charge of

White Horse and Red Lion

being a sorceress—"Si je l'étais je serais déjà loin!" that whirlwind jealousy with which Frou-Frou would round upon her sister: "Tu m'as pris tout; eh bien, garde tout!" Or Réjane's return to her husband, her nose red with a fortnight's weeping? Or Mrs. Kendal's tension on board the boat from which she is to throw herself? Or Irving's delirious "I had a limekiln once?" Or that awful face of French Louis which, as you walked home, made you afraid of each lonely bit of road? Or his ineffable reproach to Moray in Willis's nonsensical *Charles I.*: "Judas had eyes like thine of tender blue!" I am afraid I accounted but lamely for those actors who, living, have been half my life. How, then, reconstruct John Philip Kemble, dead those hundred years?

Next morning I made a tour of my book-cases. Now, at last, was the day of justification for that, at the time of purchase, thoroughly unjustifiable extravagance—Dent's *Complete Works of William Hazlitt* in twelve volumes, thirteen including the index. That useful adjunct gave, I found, no fewer than sixty-four references to John Philip—to look up which was in itself a morning's work. Now I am too old a bird to fall into that trap. Hazlitt to me is pure bait, and to look up sixty-four of his references is to swallow sixty-four whole essays. I must dip at random, then, and trust to luck. For the rest Doran offered tattered counsel,

78

An Old Actor

Mantzius thundered from between the covers of the sixth volume of his *History of Theatrical Art*, a Mrs. Clement Parsons lent some pretty prattle. This is what I gleaned and—the reader will note the air of omniscience at first hand.

Of the facts of this actor's life a good deal is recorded. We know that he made his first appearance at Wolverhampton in 1776, the year of Garrick's retirement, and that he appears to have acted comedy parts over the heads of his audience. At York he was laughed at in tragedy by "some persons of distinction seated in the boxes." For a period Kemble turned poet, wrote Latin odes and epitaphs, composed a tragedy and a comedy, and "improved" Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* by turning it into a farce, and the two Dromios into a couple of niggers. Shedding all this nonsense, on September 30, 1783, being then twenty-six, he made his first appearance in London at Drury Lane, in that admirable trial-horse, *Hamlet*. The critiques were so fierce and so various as to announce to the town the arrival of a new actor who at least could not be considered negligible. For a time the brother was overshadowed by his more tremendous sister, although he was not often allowed to play "opposite" her. An actor called Smith was in possession of the leading male rôles, and naturally declined to give them up to a newcomer. We read that when Mrs. Siddons played Lady Macbeth

White Horse and Red Lion

Smith played the Thane "with graceful indifference." When finally John and Sarah came together in *King John* and *The Gamester*, it was by Constance and by Mrs. Beverley that the audience was chiefly moved.

About this time Kemble married "the tiresome Miss Hopkins," the daughter of the Drury Lane prompter and the original Maria in *The School for Scandal*. Of this actress it was said that she was never known to draw either a smile or a tear. She became Kemble's wife, adds Mantzius, "without thereby becoming in any notable degree a better actress." From this point Kemble's career was a triumph scarcely interrupted. He became manager of the theatres, first at Drury Lane, then at Covent Garden, in the latter of which he had a sixth share. When that theatre was burnt down in 1808, Kemble was "not much moved." The Duke of Northumberland lent him £10,000, and on the reopening night sent him his bond as a present. Six years after, in retirement, Kemble died abroad in every circumstance of ease, gentility, and renown.

Let it be said that there seems to have been a good deal of fudge about Kemble. He was a great actor, and he knew it. That all the world knew it, too, did not prevent him from insisting upon the fact persistently, if tacitly. He had all the great actor's jealousy, and the utmost he ever said of Kean was "the gentleman is terribly in earnest." He himself appears to have been

An Old Actor

solemnity personified, indulging in stupendous platitudes upon ordinary and extraordinary occasion. He writes to his brother Charles with reference to their father's death :—

“ Nothing, in my opinion, could be better judged than your interring my poor father without the bad affectation of any parade, and I agree with you entirely, that his remains should be protected by a simple stone ; but I beg that in the plain memorial inscribed on it, his age may be mentioned. Long life implies virtuous habits, and they are real honours.”

Yet this orating, pedagogic gentleman liked a good drinking bout. “ He drank,” says Mrs. Clement Parsons, “ solemnly, as became an earnest tragedian, but to a degree that sometimes resulted in his slipping under the table.” When staying with Sir Walter Scott he “ imbibed claret by the pailful.” In mitigation it may be said that when Nature made Kemble she built not a man but a hero. His outline was monumental. The impression he made in private life was that he was too big for a room. All the similes which have come down to us in connection with this actor are of the heroic order. He “ stood on his own ground and he stood high on it.” His tones “ had a learned quaintness like the colouring of Poussin.” He was tragedy, “ turretted, crowned, and crested, with its front gilt and bloodstained.” Macready, we are told, raised tragedy from earth, whereas Kemble lowered it from the skies.

White Horse and Red Lion

"He is," wrote Scott, "a lordly vessel, goodly and magnificent, when going large before the wind, but wanting the facility to go 'ready about.' " John Philip was more than uncommon tall, had a front like Jove, a nose like a promontory, and an eye like Titian's schoolmaster—"to look at, not to look with." Lawrence painted him as Hamlet, poised above all other mortals "on the top of a globe like Moses on Pisgah." *The Times* of 1816 compared the actor, then on the point of retirement, with "the ruin of a magnificent temple in which the divinity still resides." But this extreme praise was sometimes qualified. Hazlitt countered that the temple was unimpaired but that the divinity was sometimes from home. Again it was said that he was the statue of perfect tragedy rather than the living soul, and that his dignified, elaborate manner was the very negation of impetuosity and fire, and flowed too much like a stream of glass. As Coriolanus, Kemble wore his head so tremendously in air that "it seems as if he would gibbet Simmons on his nose, he looks so lofty." His supercilious airs and nonchalance in this, generally accounted his best part, reminded one writer of the "unaccountable abstracted air, the contracted eyebrows, and suspended chin of a man about to sneeze." His Sir Giles Overreach was a quaint and "out-of-the-way" failure.

That Kemble "fancied himself" in comedy goes without saying. Some seventy or eighty

An Old Actor

years before his time he had the "repertory" notion that knowledge and study, if only profound enough, can qualify the actor for the lighter as for the more serious side of his art. This, of course, is sheer nonsense. By taking thought man may very well be able to add a cubit to his stature, but he cannot, by the same process, turn himself into a funny fellow. Dean Inge tries hard in the popular press, and we behold the gloomy result. But then it is merely two of Fate's whims that the cleric is not a tragic clown and that the tragedian was not a bishop. Kemble's smile in comedy was said to resemble the plating on a coffin, and John Taylor's couplet is, of course, familiar:—

"Whene'er he tries the airy and the gay,
Judgment, not genius, marks the cold essay."

In a word Kemble was no comedian, and it was only his self-conceit which allowed him to contemplate what, with that personality, would have been at best an uncanny possibility. Taken all round, he was not a supremely great actor. Garrick was better as Richard III., Macklin as Shylock, Barry as Othello, and probably Kean was a greater actor than Kemble in every respect and in every part, save, possibly, those of certain classic nobility and detachment—Cato, Coriolanus, Cardinal Wolsey. It follows that Kemble was not an impersonator of

White Horse and Red Lion

human beings. He was John Philip Kemble, whom it pleased to demonstrate in his own person how a Lear, an Othello, or a Macbeth should live and move and have his being. He played Hamlet "like a man in armour." Perhaps we may sum him up as a persistently good actor who could, on occasion, be tedious. He had not one-quarter of Irving's faults, but from all that I can read, neither did he possess one-quarter of that old man's terror and pathos.

As a great actor Kemble, of course, cared nothing for the drama. Even his Coriolanus was a re-hash concocted by himself and his prompter out of James Thomson's mutilation of Shakespeare. The version was called *Coriolanus, or the Roman Matron*, and was chosen for the actor's farewell performance. Kemble was lucky. His first appearance coincided with Garrick's retirement, and his last with the rise of Macready. But he could not avoid Kean, who, we are told, "possessed all that Kemble wanted of perfection."

A Spring Running

A Spring Running

WHEN I was a boy, the page of literature which delighted me most was that devoted by Mr. Kipling to Mowgli's Spring Running. Just as, on a day in spring the man-cub felt the sap and juice of life stir within him, so that he must put mile upon mile behind him, so was I wont, towards Easter, to take my bicycle from its winter quarters and ride and ride and ride. Whence and whither, you ask? From Manchester, gentle reader, through the heart of the Peak country over such moors and hills and borne upon such a wind as you, pale Londoner, can never know, to Ashbourne in Derbyshire, where in the setting sun the roads gleam golden like the crust of apple-pie, are powdered with dust like caster-sugar, and a little rain turns the lime-filled ruts to runnels of purest cream.

Now that I am approaching the sere and yellow, I can no longer wait for Easter. January out, I would be rid of the chill in these old bones, anticipate that spring, lagging, whatever Shelley and his great rival Hutchinson may say, too far behind. Spring is upon me so soon as, from the top of my No. 16 bus, I glimpse the placards on the fronts of the shops: "Great White Sale." When Oxford Street, deserting its autumn russets and winter browns, bursts into a pale rapture to outvie the snowdrop and the crocus—whose harbinger is Mr. Gordon Selfridge—why,

White Horse and Red Lion

then I know that spring is here. As soon as I see those sales signalled which come before the swallow dares, I withdraw from my tailor's carton a dream in trouserings, put on my pinkest shirt and stripiest socks, and saunter forth happy in the conceit that not even Solomon was more modishly arrayed.

I began this year's Spring Running at the Marble Arch, keeping carefully to Oxford Street's one and only side. The reader will remember how, in the play, Lady Bracknell objects to Gwendolen's marriage to Jack Worthing on the ground that his house is on the unfashionable side of Belgrave Square. Personally, I should look twice at a bride bringing as dowry rentals from Oxford Street's shabbier pavement. Is Selfridge's on the unfashionable side? Or Waring & Gillow's? Or Bourne & Hollingworth's? Go to! The first window which attracted me was full of perambulators at the, to my mind, exorbitant price of eleven guineas! Whereas, when I was a boy, thirty shillings was the proper price, neither more nor less. I remember having frequently seen them hanging up outside second-hand ironmongers' at this price. But perhaps times are changed, and a second-hand pram is not considered good enough for a perfectly new baby. That which entitled these infant black barouches to a place in a white sale was a number of white storks, papa and mamma storks with little baby storks in tow, artfully disposed about the window-floor. Either the window-dresser must have had a symbolical turn of mind or he had been reading Maeterlinck!

A Spring Running

It was about a third of the way down the street that I reached the real snow-line. Here the windows were quite unimaginably white. Whiter than the peaks of Chimborazo or Popocatpetl, than the career of a Prime Minister as seen by his party organ, than Soviet Russia viewed by Communists, than Théophile Gautier's *Symphonie en Blanc Majeur*. Whiter even than the paper which I am now blackening, or the "whitewash on the wall" of those route-marches of long ago. Maidens blameless as Lohengrin's Elsa, and quite as inquisitive, rubbed the powder off their noses against the glistening panes, sighed, and moved in virgin ecstasy to the next snowy prospect. Once I saw a pale shopper emerge, and she, poor, battered harri-dan, was pursued by an expert in kleptomania disguised in the likeness of a shopwalker. I forbore to listen to the heartrending colloquy which ensued.

Tell me what windows attract a woman's gaze and I will tell you what like that woman is. Those mountains of table-napkins, towels, and polishing cloths—so exactly piled that only the skilled observer with sextant and theodolite could have separated them—attracted none but the dowdy and the frump. Other windows there were so fluffily, flagrantly surrounded, that I knew them to contain bridal gowns, trousseaux, and those effeminacies which are not for masculine eyes. I could but linger on the fringe of these crowds, and drink Goty's latest perfume: *Nostalgie* and *Secret d'Amour*. Intoxicated with attar of rose, and nose-tickled by chinchilla, I moved on to a

White Horse and Red Lion

window where half a naked lady wrapped round her waxen bust an ermine stole marked "Only 18 *gs.* !" And to think that a bit of rat or rabbit had equally expelled the winter's flaw ! At eighteen guineas the thing might have been preposterously dear ; at "only" eighteen the bargain jumped to the eyes. Who shall say that salesmanship is not an art ?

One window there was which raised my curiosity to the highest pitch. It was like a scene from a play, or a canvas by the Hon. John Collier. A white goddess sat before her dressing-table in a *negligée* whose purity would have put alabaster to shame. Her unstudied pose must have been the outcome of hours of careful composition. Her right knee reposed chastely upon her left, and from her right foot depended carelessly a white satin slipper. Her left, making indentation upon a purple cushion, gave the impression of solidity, of life. You felt that under this waxen skin were muscles and real bone. A tiring-maid, arrayed in one of those neat three-and-elevenpenny aprons displayed in bulk in the next window and wearing the daintiest of caps (2*s.* 11*d.*) on her pert head, dressed her mistress's hair. From the expression on both their faces it was apparent that Jenny had ventured upon an observation which the young lady, not altogether displeased, had nevertheless felt it incumbent upon her to rebuke. *Now what had been that observation ?*

I cogitated a hundred possibilities, none of which quite fitted. I bethought me of the things

90

A Spring Running

upon which confidantes in Italian opera are wont to venture. It seemed to me that I had not sufficient data as to the young lady's character. My mind harked back to that drawing wherein Aubrey Beardsley represents the toilet-table of a heathen goddess as littered with the works of Zola and other improper writers. But the heroine of our tableau is no Venus of the unpardonable hill, but obviously a very proper young woman from Grosvenor Square. And there, among the bric-a-brac at the foot of the mirror, surrounded by the manicure sets in ivory and gold, silver and mother-of-pearl, the trinket boxes in jade beryl and chrysoprase, the brooches, pearls and ouches of a modern young lady's adorning—there I espied the photograph of a young man in soldierly attire, *circa* 1914. Obviously, it was of him that the maid had spoken. *But what had she said?* What, indeed, could have provoked that tart-seeming, essentially mollified reply? On this note of mystery I brought my peregrination to an end. My Spring Running had not been without its note of wistful inscrutable Romance.

The Incomparable Baerlein

The Incomparable Baerlein

"I AM not incomparable," wrote Max to Mr. Bohun Lynch. "Compare me." And Mr. Lynch did compare him. The subject of this essay stands alone, and I shall not compare him.

Edgar Maximilian Baerlein was born at Pendleton, near Manchester, in the latter half of the last century, in 1879 to be precise. Whatever he may have learned at Eton besides games is not to present purpose, though if you were to suggest that it was at that seat of polite ignorance that the subject of this essay first learned to become *facile princeps* at rackets, and afterwards at tennis, he would, I think, be able to grasp your meaning. Of his career at Cambridge nothing, save his championships, is known. Of these, then, let me speak.

But first I am to say something of tennis, what it is, and what it is not. What it is not is the more important. It is NOT lawn-tennis which, from its birth in the seventies, is to-day and must always be, essentially a second-class game. This bastard version of tennis is a game at which no first-class player of cricket, football, tennis, rackets, or even golf has ever deemed it worth while to play, since any athlete in any branch of ball-games can jump into first-class lawn-tennis within six months of first grasping a lawn-tennis racket. Max Woosnam is a shining example. The difference in standing between tennis and lawn-tennis is sufficiently

White Horse and Red Lion

shown by a remark which H. S. Mahony once addressed to Baerlein. "If you were to practise with me at lawn-tennis regularly for three months you might beat me; if I were to play tennis with you for three years you would still give me half the game." He meant, let me insist, that any good player of ball-games can become first-class at lawn-tennis, whereas only a tennis player can become first-class at tennis. In a word, tennis is as much superior to its derivative as golf is to marbles, baseball to rounders, chess to draughts, bridge to bumble-puppy.

In the world of sport there is only one unpardonable solecism. In boxing it is not the thing to hit below the belt; the fisherman who steals another man's water asks for trouble; in the hunting-field there are some six thousand things that you must not do. But you may commit all these blunders; you may extol the merits of the Hackney to the hunting man, you may cheat at cards and fail to stand your corner, BUT YOU MUST NOT WRITE OR TALK OF "TENNIS" WHEN YOU MEAN "LAWN-TENNIS." Whosoever offends in this matter writes him down a cad. Does the reader protest that he has never before so much as heard of the royal game? My dear sir, ignorance in this matter, as in smaller ones, is no excuse. So take your lesson in good part and learn it now. "Lawn-tennis," as Hamlet remarked of another word, is easily said.

Tennis is that game first indicated by R. H. Lyttelton when he wrote that there are three

The Incomparable Baerlein

moments in life of which the realisation is sufficient to justify another *Nunc Dimittis*:—

(1) The cut stroke at tennis, when the striker wins chase one and two on the floor.

(2) The drive of 200 yards with the “guttie.”

(3) A crack to square-leg off a half-volley just outside the legs.

Tennis has lineage. Chaucer speaks of it; the Arthurian romances are full of it. Shakespeare is in the swim:—

Hen. V. : What treasure, uncle ?

Exeter : Tennis-balls, my liege.

Hen. V. : We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;

His present and your pains we thank you for:
When we have match'd our rackets to these balls,
We will, in France, by God's grace, play a set
Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
That all the courts of France will be disturb'd
With chases.

In Wolsey's accounts there are items of moneys paid “for one who should serve at tennis for the king,” and then there is the striking reference in the last testament of Young Weston, that royal favourite who lost his head through a too openly avowed passion for Anne Boleyn. The youngster leaves a pile of debts, and begs that they be paid. “To my draper fifty pounds, to my lord of Wylshyre forty pounds in angels, to my taylor twenty-six

White Horse and Red Lion

pounds, to parson Robynson"—Mr. Whibley remarks that there must have been sporting parsons even in those days—"sixty-six pounds," and most pathetically, "to a pooer woman at the Tennes play for bawles I cannot tell howe muche." He was one of six victims, and the bluff king lost his partner at tennis, but took another in matrimony.

Perhaps those of my readers who do not know the game will not take it amiss if I outline it for them.

To begin with, it must be explained that tennis is played in a covered space shaped roughly like a lawn-tennis court. (It is singularly humiliating to have to explain a parent in terms of its child.) Its dimensions are 110 feet by 32, as against the lawn-tennis measurements of 78 by 27. An inner wall 7 feet from the main wall runs round three sides to the height of 7 feet, from which a sloping roof, called the penthouse, reaches back to the main wall. A net divides the court into equal halves, the balls are hard, and the racket neat, compact, strong, and altogether different from the barn-door implement of the game's degenerate successor. The service is from one side of the net only. There are some forty varieties, not including the "railroad," which was introduced by the Americans. The ball being served and returned, the server, if he does not like the look of the return, is not bound to take it. He lets it drop, and the marker notes and calls out the number of the chase, *i.e.*, the number of yards the ball was from the wall behind the server at its second bounce. This

98

The Incomparable Baerlein

stroke is then held in abeyance, and does not come into account until one of the players has scored 40, as at lawn-tennis, or until another chase has accrued, when the players change sides, and the player who has allowed the chase or chases to be made must then endeavour to win it or them, *i.e.*, to place the second bound of the ball returned by him "better," that is nearer to the end wall than the point at which the original chase was marked. As often as his adversary returns his stroke, he must again endeavour to do this, until he succeeds or fails. The marking is complicated, and Senior Wranglers have taken weeks to grasp it. At lawn-tennis it is either hit or miss; a ball which is duffed or hit wildly out of bounds is no worse than a return which only needed an inch less of length to be magnificent; one winning stroke is no better than another. At tennis there are degrees of goodness and of badness; each stroke has relative merit, and thus we attain to the prestige of modern philosophy. The speed of the game is such that when a lawn-tennis player starts for a ball a tennis player will have already travelled eight yards; when the former has given a ball up as hopeless, the latter will begin to think of retrieving it and still have time to spare. Great pace to beat the adversary and heavy cut to control the ball are the essence of the game. No teacher worth his salt will allow his pupil to play a match until he has laboured at the stroke for seven years. Once acquired, it abides for ever.

But I began, not with a game, but with one of

White Horse and Red Lion

its masters. I will take Baerlein's racket career first, since that was the game which he played first. It should be unnecessary to describe how this is played, even to the modern youth.

Edgar Baerlein played rackets for his school in 1898. He was second string for Cambridge University (to E. B. Noel) in 1899. In 1900, owing to an accident, he did not play. In 1901 he beat Noel, and in 1903 won the Amateur Rackets Championship. In 1904 he lost the championship to H. K. Foster, but recovered it in 1905. More accidents kept him out of the court in 1906 and 1907. Baerlein won the championship again in 1908-09-10-11, and withdrew in 1912. In 1913 he tried for both the amateur rackets and tennis championships, and lost both. In 1914 he lost the rackets again. For the next four years the championship was not played. In 1919 Baerlein did not compete. In 1920 and 1921 he won both championships; in 1922 lost the rackets and won the tennis; in 1923 he repeated his double success of 1920 and 1921.

In tennis I shall tabulate:—

AMATEUR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP

1912—Won.	1918—No contest.
1913—Lost.	1919—Won.
1914—Won.	1920—Won.
1915—No contest.	1921—Won.
1916—No contest.	1922—Won.
1917—No contest.	1923—Won.
	1924—Won.

The Incomparable Baerlein

To sum up, Baerlein has won the amateur rackets championship nine times, the amateur tennis championship eight times, and held the two together on three occasions. Of his technical quality at rackets that great authority, E. B. Noel, has written: "Baerlein possesses an extraordinary combination of pose and neatness of foot, for he is in a position to make an attacking stroke off returns that others would scarcely reach at all, and a power of placing a length that is almost uncanny in its accuracy. . . . Whatever he may have thought of an opponent, he never made the mistake of under-rating him in a match." In court Baerlein is the most punctilious of players. I would add "chivalrous," were it not that his mind refuses, during a match for championship, to unbend to that mistaken virtue.

Baerlein crowds his riches into little room. Despite his few inches, he has the grace of a Driscoll and the strength of a Ledoux. He runs, as Mrs. Kendal used to say in an old comedy, "like the swift hare." He has always had to fight not only his opponents' skill but also his own ill-luck; he has met with so many accidents that his frame is riveted together like a piece of valuable china. Unlike Achilles, who was vulnerable only in the heel, Baerlein has to fear knee, elbow, and shoulder as well. Yet whenever he limps about the court as though his next step would be his last, some familiar spirit pulls him through. He is of the dæmonic order of players; the championship or Westminster Abbey is implicit in the grasp of

White Horse and Red Lion

his racket. In the first game of the semi-final of last year's rackets championship, the little man received a blow between the eyes from his opponent's elbow, was taken out of court unconscious, and returned to win the match! In this he proved himself like the fellow in Bunyan: "I have fought till my sword did cleave to my hand; and when they were joined together as if the sword grew out of my arm; and when the blood run thorow my fingers, then I fought with most courage." It was said of Edmund Kean that as soon as he stepped upon the stage you knew him to be a genius. You no more argued about it, declared a writer of that day, than you do about a leg of mutton. It was there, plain for all the world to see. The same holds true of Baerlein. This great player has only to step into the court and you realise his genius. In his rare defeats he has been singularly like Kean's Richard, who, after his sword was wrested from him, stood with his hands stretched out "as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had a withering power." It may be safely said that Baerlein wins his matches in the dressing-room, and on rare occasion loses them in the court. His opponents have a vision of the little man in defeat as horrific as Hazlitt's picture of Kean. Subconsciously they are overawed by the greatest ball-game mentality that rackets and tennis have known, and are a trifle aghast at their temerity in opposing it. Baerlein has a knack of making his opponents play his own game which, like his length, is little short of uncanny.

The Incomparable Baerlein

In the tennis championship of 1920, challenge round, Baerlein put the balls where he liked, and E. A. C. Druce, the challenger, was made to put them where Baerlein liked, and that was all. Two sets out of the three were love sets, and speculation was rife as to whether Druce would get a game. When he did, some one in the dedans remarked, "I don't suppose Baerlein will care to win now!" And there you have this player in a nutshell. *Aut Cæsar aut nullus* is his motto. You might translate it, "Plus seven or give up the game." Few men have played games so brilliantly; few have understood their spirit so little. With Baerlein games are exact sciences, and their exponent reaches out after a perfection that never can be on sea or land. To hear him talk you would think his most brilliant performances were botches. So they are, judged by an impossible standard. "The greater the player," he once declared to me, "the greater the number of shots which he cannot play. The beginner can only miss one, the simple forehand return. As soon as he has mastered that he discovers two of which he knows nothing—the backhand and the volley. And so on." Baerlein has no feeling for games; he only plays them perfectly. He knows nothing of the joy of hitting a ball and wondering what will happen; he knows beforehand what will happen. His methods are dictated by the intolerable light of pure reason; his game is impersonal in the sense that the Rules of Logic and the Books of Euclid are impersonal. To err is human; not to err, or to err very little, is

White Horse and Red Lion

Baerlein. Take a motoring example. I once ventured to remonstrate with my friend for driving at fifty miles an hour, past a child playing hopscotch on the kerbstone, without sounding his horn.

"She might have jumped in front of the car," I argued.

"She was on the wrong leg!" he replied.

Baerlein will not talk about his own prowess at any game, except disparagingly. The champion abhors egoism, but his modesty is disheartening to a weaker brother. It is a stern outlook which considers a golf score of 85 as pitiful as one of 120. But then this immaculate logician was down to scratch within nine months of first handling a club. He is the very pink of courtesy on the links, but his unfortunate victims are made subtly aware that their chances of snatching an odd hole are so remote as to be incalculable. To perfect natural gifts, a wonderful eye and an obedient hand, he adds this subtle power of winning before he begins his match. But what are you to make of a philosopher who has calmly given his view of the chances of the survival of human personality after death as "a shade worse than five or two against?"

But it is to the classics I must go for any fitting abstract of this great brain. "His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clockwork. You never catch his mind in an

The Incomparable Baerlein

undress. . . . You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian—you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousness, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain or vocabulary. The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. . . . You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him—for he sets you right.” Add the sentence, “He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy’s country,” and you have a picture of the greatest mind ever thrown away upon a game.

A boxer, Baerlein would have halved the world with Jimmy Wilde; a chess player, he would have drawn with Capablanca; a man of letters, he would have out-Maxed Max; a politician, he would have made rings round the subtlest of Welsh foxes.

He has no equal at rackets ; but the American, Jay Gould, is said to be his superior at tennis.

They have met twice, in Paris last year and in London in May of this year. On the first occasion Gould was unwell, and Baerlein won an extraordinary match by two sets to one, 4-8, 8-5, 8-4. The critic of *The Times* wrote :—

“It is significant that when Mr. Baerlein coughs he is beginning to think. He began to cough in the third game of the first set. From

White Horse and Red Lion

that time on he began a series of experiments which finally satisfied him. After that he played with an assurance which, against Mr. Jay Gould as he was playing at the time, seemed little short of impertinence. The French all speak of his wrist flick, the development of his rackets, with an admiration which is almost reverence. It was on the back hand that this wrist flick was so very noticeable, and Mr. Baerlein, the player of so many wonderful strokes, will probably remember to the end of his life a *coup de temps* in the back-hand corner, which would have won chase four, but which he put into the grille apparently with an easy certainty. . . . In the first set Mr. Gould seemed to have Mr. Baerlein in what is known in schoolboy language as stone-cold. Against such a versatile, gifted, and particularly brainy player one should keep him in that condition as long as possible. As a matter of fact, it is very difficult to keep Mr. Baerlein under any control. Perhaps Mr. Gould thought he had won the match too easily."

The writer goes on to recount how Baerlein, after winning the first game in the third and deciding set, and losing the next three, began to attack with "vitriolic ferocity." He set an incredible pace, and won with something to spare.

The second encounter was disastrous from Baerlein's point of view. His knee was bad, he could not run, and so was prevented from volleying Gould's heavily-cut returns. Pace can only beat

106

The Incomparable Baerlein

cut on condition that pace is there. It was enforcedly absent on this occasion, and Baerlein never looked like winning. He made a game shot at the first set, lost it for no particular reason, and was beaten 6-5, 6-3, 6-1.

Only once have I seen Baerlein discomfited. It was at Sandwich, and we were playing golf together.

"What's the line, boy?" he asked.

"Them chimbleys, sir," replied the caddie, pointing to a bunch on the horizon, some five miles distant.

"Which chimney?" pursued the stickler for accuracy, who had previously worried his caddie not a little.

"The 'ole bloomin' lot, *my lord!*" the boy replied.

Baerlein understands everything in heaven and earth except man, to whom he has only condescended sufficiently to triumph over him. And I must think that the souls of all the champion's victims spoke through the mouth of that rude caddie. It will have been gathered that my friend does not suffer fools gladly: I have given that little story to show that they do not always bear with him as submissively as they should. Yet let me add that as he has grown older he has become "altogether jollier and more sensible," as Mr. Shaw remarked of Sarah Bernhardt.

"A great chess-player," said Hazlitt, "is not a great man, for he leaves the world as he found it. No act terminating in itself constitutes greatness.

White Horse and Red Lion

This will apply to all displays of power or trials of skill, which are confined to the momentary individual effort, and construct no permanent image or trophy of themselves without them. . . .

A man at the top of his profession is not, therefore, a great man. He is great in his way, but that is all, unless he shows the marks of a great moving intellect, so that we trace the master-mind, and can sympathise with the springs that urge him on."

The qualifications here imposed as to the essential conditions of greatness put me in a quandary as to my hero. Certainly none ever sympathised with the springs that urge this great racket player on. Perfection is his spur, and perfection's a dull thing. Or you may say that he is vain of the immensity by which his reach exceeds his grasp. Yet it will never be said that Baerlein left the world as he found it. He found the players of rackets and tennis contented with their efforts, and leaves them, if he retires as now he threatens, discontented with their achievements. On the whole, I conclude that Hazlitt, who shall judge for me, would have declared Baerlein to be a greater man than Nelson. "Lord Nelson"—you remember the passage—"was a great naval commander; but for myself, I have not much opinion of a sea-faring life." Hazlitt would have claimed Baerlein as a great rackets player, and we know from the essay on *The Indian Jugglers* how highly he rated that game. But I doubt whether the comparison would please my hero, who is capable of pointing out that at Copenhagen Nelson grounded three ships. Once

108

The Incomparable Baerlein

before I paid tribute to my friend's greatness—in the dedication to him of my first book on the theatre. In that art Baerlein is totally unlearned. Or pretends to be. *Finis coronat opus*. A trifle of seeming nescience on even one subject makes the man easier of common approach. In philosophic discussion Baerlein will split hairs with you till kingdom come ; in æsthetic he is ignorant, heaven be praised, as the common carp.

Half-Remembered Things



Half-Remembered Things

I HAVE often wondered whether anybody else's mind resembles a rag-bag as nearly as mine. All kinds of unrelated strands float through it for no apparent reason, things that I have not been clever enough to grasp, and others which I have let slip and forgotten.

Snatches of old tunes, a line of poetry, a scene from a play—all these flash across me without my being able to "place" them, to fit them into any connected whole. I look before and after, and pine for things forgot. Suddenly I will have a vision of Ellen Terry in an orchard, preparing to descend a ladder and gazing on some happy lover with welcome such as never was on sea or land or other woman's face; of Mrs. Kendal barring the door to an infuriated Mr. Kendal as determinedly as French and Joffre and Haig and Foch ever barred the door to the Germans. Yet I have not the ghost of a notion what these two plays were about.

Or I find myself musing on some story from my childhood in which an old man shuts himself up in a cellar—the body is found some fifty years later gnawed away by the rats. On a book of boyhood's days, in which the heroes, Ralph, Peterkin, and another whose name I cannot recall, also come upon a skeleton. The illustrations of this find seemed to me so grisly that, sitting up late

White Horse and Red Lion

one night, in my twenties, I tore the page out and put it into the fire. I have not the remotest idea of the titles of these two books, nor what their authors' names were.

Sometimes I find myself humming an old song. The first word I can remember is "showers." Next something about "birds and flowers," or possibly "bees and flowers," and then, finally, "unto the weary, rest." I shall never know what that song is. Perhaps it were better that I should not. I should buy a copy of it, and try it over on my piano, and find, perhaps, that I do not like it. And I am terribly afraid of disillusion.

Or, again, it may be a picture. I remember one of an old man leading a much older horse, which was attached to a cart in still later stages of decrepitude. The scene was, I determined, the coast of Suffolk, and for many years I invented for myself the title of "The Sea-weed Gatherer." I do not know why I should have found this title; the cart was as empty of sea-weed as Mr. Hardy's later poems are of hope. The thing hung upon my night-nursery wall, and the old man whose face, doubtless weather-beaten with much gathering, I never saw, was for many years one of my closest friends. Not in any European gallery have I seen a picture which has seemed to me to be so excessively romantic. I fear to come across it in a lumber room.

I can recall a gate overlooking a rich vale, a sunset and some cows, and an older person telling me that one day these things would not make me

Half-Remembered Things

happy, but sad. I thought my mentor an old fool, and would have set Trip, our dog, on to the cattle, but was restrained. Sometimes an odd view of the sea comes upon me, seen from an elevation of six years and four feet—I was a fine child for my age—and suddenly I taste cold milk and rather gritty gingerbread, and feel the sand between my toes, and have difficulty in pulling on a pair of cream socks. Then I feel a tug at the hand, and am told I shall be “late for dinner, as usual.” That voice I can hear to-day. I heard it as I was writing the last sentence. It belongs to an old lady of well over seventy, who has alternately petted and bullied me since I was two. “Hurry up, Master James,” she was saying, “hurry up with that writing, or you’ll be late for dinner, as usual.”

Last night I awoke with a start, crying out : “Emma Jane Worboise! Emma Jane Worboise!” What stirring of memory was that? What book read aloud to me by my old nurse comes back to me on that name? Has anybody else, I wonder, a mind so disconnected, a mind so very like a rag-bag?

More Advice to the Players

More Advice to the Players

MR. BASIL DEAN, Director of Reandean, has taken advantage of the opening of the Playbox to gather his company together and talk to them about first principles. From a copy of the address which was forwarded to me, I gather that no representative of the business side of the theatre was present, and that the affair was just a heart-to-heart talk among artists assembled to discuss their art. This is the first time within my knowledge that a director of a theatre has shown any sign of consciousness that his employees are artists and not dumb driven cattle, articulate only at the bidding of the prompter. All honour to this director who, imprudent fellow, cannot fail to get it hot from his colleagues in the business. Some form of artistic blacklegging will be the charge, and his published remarks show him naked of defence.

Incautiously Mr. Dean betrays a knowledge of the history of the modern theatre, and a weakness for theorising. But you shall hear him:

“By constant association with actors—I mean, of course, in their right sphere as spectators—audiences can inspire and help the development of such a company to a miraculous extent. Dramatists becoming personally interested in a special company of players, and in the particular audience to whom appeal is made, seem to acquire an

White Horse and Red Lion

extra sense of what is expected of them. Once let them become infected with the spirit underlying such an enterprise, and they can become almost the greatest contributory factor to the general success. It is this enthusiastic co-ordination that goes to build up a really individual theatre, one to which no artistic triumph can be long denied. Do not doubt this remark ; and do not doubt your own capacity to help on such a result. Nearly all the great theatres of Europe have been built up in this way—the early German theatres of Ekhof and Schröder, the House of Molière, the Meiningen Players, the Moscow Art Theatre, the Reinhardt Company of Shakespearean actors in Berlin, and so on.”

J’ever hear such nonsense ? Was it the wont of Daly or Frohman or Edwardes to spout such bosh ? Did ever Tree so talk through his dome ? The silly fellow actually commits the imprudence of putting trust in his actors ! He proposes to do with little or no scenery. Splendid ! (I am not going to keep up the pretence that Mr. Dean is a knave and a fool.) In the case of an Inn Scene with two drunken brawlers quarrelling by the light of an oil lamp, all that the actors will be given is “one corner of the stage illuminated, with an indefinite background, a table, two chairs, and something to represent a lamp. All the rest must come from yourselves.” Magnificent ! From the *actor*, not from the scene-painter, or the “art-director.” At last a theatre-manager has discovered that a theatre is a place

More Advice to the Players

for actors to act in! A new and costly system of stage-lighting "will fill up any too blank spaces in the minds of the audience caused by the simple scenery." Mr. Dean need have no fear. With good acting there will be none. "I believe it is the business of an actor to create character and then to pass on his creation in a vivid form to his audience, who should receive a distinct emotional impression from the process quite apart from the general interest created by the work of the dramatist." Bravo! Mr. Dean has "tumbled" to the inspiration which Lamb and Hazlitt knew consciously and the least expert playgoer feels sub-consciously. "You have the confident assurance that no influence or private intrigue will ever rob any individual artist of the opportunity for which he or she is best suited." These are brave words and a brave resolve.

"From time to time you may be called upon to appear in parts quite unlike anything you have ever done before." A notion to tease the professional distributor of parts! I am told that when the film-producer casts a "picture," say "Roundhead and Cavalier," hundreds of Cromwells and Charles's file past him, and he stoppeth one of about three thousand whose wart is correctly placed or whose beard is the exact length. So it is with the stage, where there is a perfect mania for round pegs in round holes. Let me tell Mr. Dean a true story. A young actress, desirous of joining a repertory company, got so far as an interview with the director's secretary. "What's

White Horse and Red Lion

your line?" asked that young lady. The artist gave the part which she had last played, a part not unlike that of Polly Eccles. "Then I shall put you down as 'light comedy.'" The actress then mentioned her preceding part, which was on the lines of Constance in *King John*. "Then perhaps I had better put you down as 'heavy emotional'?" "Don't label me at all," was the answer, "just call me an actress!" "Ah!" said the secretary, wrinkling her nose, "*I don't think that's what we're looking for!*" Whereas it would appear from this address that what Mr. Dean is looking for is actors and actresses, and not pegs round or square, triangular or hexagonal.

I am tempted to change the title of this essay to "Advice to Art Directors." Some little time ago I went to the Lyceum Theatre where, a version of the well-known French melodrama, *Les Deux Orphelines*, was being produced.

To enjoy this play one must become childlike as the occupants of the gallery to which, of set purpose, I went. You know the kind of thing. Louise, a countess's illegitimate daughter, blind and beautiful, makes a good living for the hag who farms her by begging barefoot in the snow. Henriette, her sister in innocence, for the crime of loving an aristocrat is shut up in the Salpêtrière, whence she escapes through the self-sacrifice of a likeable young Frenchwoman who is certainly going to be wasted in the French penal settlement. There is a duel *à outrance*, of which the utterance is mitigated by the refusal of a cripple to take advantage of his

More Advice to the Players

burly assailant's having stuck his knife so hard into the kitchen table that he cannot get it out. There is a garret so huge that Louise, prone on a mattress *R.C.*, has to shout like Grace Darling to her crew to make herself heard at the fireplace *L.* In the vast theatre the actors hardly appeared "in the round," but to be silhouetted against the scenery like the figures of a toy theatre. One almost looked for the little slip of cardboard which should keep them upright. You know what the actors were like. Lady Tree rightly posed as though she would portray not a particular hag, but all malevolence. Mr. Dennis Neilson-Terry made a leg, and had a gesture so ample that when he drew his sword he imperilled half the company. As a trooper seated next to me explained to his young lady: "If 'e'd been in our lot 'e'd 'ave drawn 'is sword over 'is shoulder. The way as 'e did it, 'e'd 'ave cut the next bloke's 'e'd off!" Miss Mary Merrall endowed the heroine with the naked simplicity of a blanched almond, and I could only fault the Henriette of Miss Colette O'Neil in that she spoke absurdly perfect French while all the other characters were talking glibly of "Monsoors," and calling the patroness of Paris "St. John of Eve." But that which chiefly amused me was the scenery, which was uniformly hideous, and of the worst representational kind, less imaginative even than the frescoed class of female art-students who, seated at their easels round the dome of this theatre, have discarded their shifts in order to paint better. One compared it with Mr. Dean's "something

White Horse and Red Lion

which might be a lamp," and one wondered how the "advanced" scene-deviser, who wants his very chairs and tables to be contributory of emotion, would handle such a play as *The Orphans*.

Probably there are still a good many people who dislike "emotional" scenery, whose interest in the theatre, like my own, is "literary," that is, confined to the story and the way in which the actor tells it. To me scenery is no more than a setting. All I demand of it is that it shall be as little intrusive as the posts and ropes which define a boxing-ring, and as little remarkable as the chairs whose business it is not to delight the eye but to support the boxers between the rounds. Of course there are plays and plays, just as there are actors and actors. You cannot overload *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is not a play but a *divertissement*, not so much drama as poetry for the ear and for the eye. It would be unkind to mention the names of the actor-managers whom one would willingly bury under mountains of their own canvas. Boaden tells us that the actors of Kemble's day foresaw, *as a matter of course*, that spectacular staging would subordinate the importance and prestige of acting. Substitute "expressionistic" for "spectacular" and the prophecy holds to-day. The fact that the new scenery is beautiful instead of hideous, only makes the matter worse. You can shut your eyes to ugliness more easily than to beauty. Perhaps this is personal to me. I can write with perfect ease amid the babel of a Lyons tea-shop or the din

More Advice to the Players

of the London Symphony Orchestra playing catch-as-catch-can with Stravinsky, but not a word during the performance of a Mozart Concerto.

The reader who wants to know what is meant by "expressionistic" scenery should study the pictures of "significant groupings" imagined by Herr Jessner, the director of the State Theatre in Berlin, for his production of *Richard III.*, and to be found in *Continental Stagecraft* by Mr. Kenneth MacGowan and Mr. Robert Edmond Jones. It will be convenient if I quote a little here.

"Jessner fills his stage with steps. He seems unable to get along without them. He must have platforms, levels, walls, terraces. They are to him what screens, towering shapes, great curtains are to Gordon Craig. In every production Jessner provides some permanent foundation besides the stage-floor for the actor to play upon, some arrangement of different levels. In his *Richard III.* it is a wall all across the stage, with a platform along the top at the base of another wall, and for certain scenes a flight of steps like a pyramid placed against the lower wall. . . . When the burghers come to ask Richard to be king, they find him 'aloft, between two bishops' in compliance with Buckingham's advice: 'Go, go up to the leads.' Jessner has Richard walk upon the platform above the wall; it is his first appearance on high and he maintains his place until the battle at the end. . . . Jessner is particularly fond of shadows. When one rival meets another and vanquishes him Jessner will have him literally 'throw him into

White Horse and Red Lion

the shade.' Spotlights, flashing on, create meaningful shadows. An amusing example occurs in the soliloquy of Richard, ending :—

“ ‘ Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a
glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass.’ ”

As Richard says this, the lights on the stage go down, and a spotlight from the prompter's box throws his humped shadow on the wall.”

Surely thus to play with magic-lantern effects and to banish the actor to a distance at which the finer shades of facial expression are lost, is to sacrifice him to a childish sense of imagery akin to that which, when a Sisera of the New Cut is slain by his paramour, makes the cheap illustrated papers print a picture of a hammer and a nail. Before Jessner's Richard can dominate our minds he must be perched upon a flight of steps; before he can show bloody intent he and his minions must be clothed in scarlet. Now whatever art this may be, it is not the art of the actor. I do not see a Kean consenting to pose between a spotlight and his own shadow like a drawing-room entertainer simulating a rabbit. Nor do I see old Irving retreating for the richest of his part up-stage, out of eye-shot.

Here let me admit that the times are against the old literary view of acting, and that though the general level of that art in this country was never so high as it is to-day, there are no preposterously “ great ”

More Advice to the Players

actors about. The ardent young playgoer who never saw Duse or Bernhardt, Réjane or Mrs. Kendal, Irving or Ellen Terry, Coquelin, Hare and Forbes-Robertson, simply does not realise the power of the transcendent actor to sweep away chairs and tables. But your modern scene-deviser, your Jessner and your Norman Bel Geddes, and I am inclined to think Mr. Gordon Craig as well, does very definitely realise that power—if Mr. Craig doesn't, who should?—and builds against and in dread of it. He puts up something monstrous and columnar which the actor cannot sweep away, and, if we may judge by the models at the recent Theatre Exhibition, would reduce the actor to the insignificance of the Egyptian tourist snapshotted against the Pyramids. Mr. Bel Geddes even demands that a special theatre be built to accommodate not the genius of his actors but the wealth of his canvas. Well, it may be that this new theatre will be better than the old. It may be that it will make a hundred appeals where the actor made but one.

I am pleading for the actor here, and it is not the business of counsel for the defence to put the case for the other side. Were I not the prisoner's friend, were I Jessner's advocate, I should emulate Messrs. MacGowan and Jones. I should, like them, dwell upon the third dimension which results from marshalling the actor up and downstairs. I should make play with the significance of movement towards and away from the audience.

But I hope I should also be honest and not

White Horse and Red Lion

pretend that Jessner is the actor's ally when he is obviously his enemy. It may very well be that the world is tired of the great actor, and *a fortiori* of the great actress. It may be that it has had enough of sentimental cocottes sobbing their hearts out on horse-hair sofas and dying ecstatically of a disease which the playwright politely calls consumption. If the modern "art-director" deems this to be the case, then let him be honest with himself and with us, and say so. Personally I would give all the marching and counter-marching up and down all the staircases in the universe, including Jacob's ladder, for Sarah's agony as she wrote that farewell to Armand, and the break in the voice when, in old Duval's letter, she came to the word "abnégation." During both these scenes Sarah had the tactlessness to sit within a yard or two of the footlights, so that emotion could be displayed on her face for stalls, pit, and gallery to behold. I have no doubt that Jessner would have bidden her write one letter from the bottom of a pit specially digged to indicate despair, and read the other from the flies, at the top of a column indicative of hope. However, I have no prejudices in the matter, and freely concede that with present-day actresses Jessner's method may be right. But I have a shrewd suspicion that if ever there be another Sarah—which there won't—the public will invite her to turn her back on producers' monkeyings and give us the great actress. "Bare boards" and a passion are nothing; bare boards and an actor suffice.

More Advice to the Players

I see no leanings in Mr. Dean to let the "expressionist" scene-shifter run away with him. I am, I confess, a trifle apprehensive of his new and expensive toy, the Schwabe-Hasait machine. This is an electrical apparatus whereby a thunder-storm may be so realistically presented that you can't tell it from a real one. Clouds will be put on with so much naturalness that the spectator will think himself in Manchester. But Mr. Dean must not be surprised if, during the downpour, Achilles take shelter in his tent and he find that, when it clears up, the great actor has decamped and is playing Lear to a crowded booth over the way, with a tea-tray and a jagged rent in a back-cloth as accessories. The trouble in the modern producer's mind is caused by the use of actors who are too small and theatres which are too big. Rubbish like *The Orphans*, competently acted but no more, and in a huge theatre, inclines the sophisticated playgoer to call in a Jessner or a Craig. But, really, he has no business to be at such a play, and these scenic artists would, it is to be feared, mightily upset the unsophisticated. They, simple fellows, have their "literary" outlook too, which the Lyceum tawdriness appears to satisfy entirely. Mr. Dean's state is happier. He has got a nice little theatre, and all he wants is some good big actors to fill it.

In Bloomsbury

In Bloomsbury

I HAD been summoned to attend a sitting of the Bloomsbury County Court of Middlesex, to be holden at the hour of TEN in the Forenoon, there to "answer the Plaintiff to a claim," etc., etc. Bidding, in Ouidaesque phrase, my man call me at eight—*anglice*, setting my alarm-clock for that untoward hour—I laid me down to sleep, conscious that on the morrow I was to fight the good fight, to do battle for Equity against the Law. At tintinabulation's call I rose, donned my finest linen and a suit not noticeably purple, and sallied forth to break my fast at—of all places—Buzzard's ! It was not, I felt, precisely the moment for wedding-cake, but for eggs, bacon, rolls, and coffee. Now pigs are but pigs and hens no more than hens in the most aristocratic, as in the meanest, of eating houses. But the coffee was superb. It put heart and nerve and sinew into him who should outstare Goliath. Braced in spirit, this David strode into the Bloomsbury County Court of Middlesex, fingering the five smooth stones of his vindication—a counter-claim, a tender, an equitable defence, misrepresentation, the cut of the plaintiff's beard.

The thing which first struck me was the extraordinary *realism* of the setting, as actual as a scene by Galsworthy. There stood the two little desks for the disputants, each with its testament; and between them, leaning a shade towards the plaintiff's

White Horse and Red Lion

side, the Canopy of Justice—all in plain deal. In the well of the court those plainest of plain dealers, the purveyors of furniture on the hire system, brooded balefully over well-thumbed note-books, tending to prove that the music-hall comedian's definition of the word instalment—"Five pounds down and five when they catch me"—was that accepted by their clients. Nasty little men with furtive collars, surreptitious neck-ties, and hide-and-seek bowlers, they wore an air of sniggering triumph. Had they not persuaded their victims to furnish out of income who had none, or even out of dole; and were not these guileless ones to learn that instalment, as certainly as Shakespeare to a West End producer, spells ruin? Those who had reposed on bedroom suites of exceptional value, had eaten off unparalleled bargains in walnut and mahogany, now sprawled them upon benches harder than fate, and chewed the cud of bitter memory.

The Court was not holden at TEN, nor anything like it. At a quarter past, a venerable personage with snow-white hair curling like Cyril Maude's, made entry with a sheaf of documents. Him I mistook for the Registrar—my case being under £3 was not for His Honour—and mentally applauded. At twenty minutes past, the Registrar appeared in person, and I knew that in applauding the minor actor I had committed the mistake of the Lyceum audiences of the eighties when, at the play of *The Corsican Brothers*, they regularly mistook the then unknown Mr. A. W. Pinero, who played Meynard, for Irving. The whole thing seemed to

In Bloomsbury

me singularly like a scene in a play. The cases rolled on, success resting unvaryingly in the plaintiff's cubby-hole, as, in a boxing-booth, it will sometimes haunt persistently a particular corner. Alas, that David was knocked out in the first round! His pebbles were all right, of that I am convinced; unfortunately something went wrong with the sling. I must bung into Goliath and Co. five little pellets monthly, consisting each of a ten-shilling note. Costs extra.

The great novelists are in the habit of suiting both scenery and weather to the exigencies of their plots, often doing nature unnecessary violence in the process. Shakespeare, on several occasions, blasted a perfectly good heath; so Hardy, so Phillpotts, the *paysagistes* romancing, as the scientists say, anthropocentrically, as though Man were the centre of the Universe. When will litigants learn that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet success to plaintiffs of understanding, nor yet favour to defendants of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all? It was a beastly day outside the Court; yet I am persuaded that the beastliness depended from strictly atmospheric conditions and not from the loss of my case. A drizzling rain was falling, a few melancholy pedestrians were "mizzling" as Surtees has it, along Great Portland Street, an unwashed blanket of fog hung between me and the sun. It was a day for tragedy, for "thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit." I could have alternately croaked and bellowed for revenge.

White Horse and Red Lion

I would have pulled, not poisoned, my enemy's ear.

And then there smote upon my own a noise transcendingly beautiful, which I was instantly prepared to back against any earthly choir—the sound of a hurdy-gurdy. But this was a super hurdy-gurdy, as who should say an “impression” of the London Symphony Orchestra in full blast, yet tinged with the naïve melancholy of the merry-go-round at the country fair. To some such strains had the luckless lads of Wenlock and Bredon, Keighton and Clun, caroused. Lads not only of the Shropshire wold but the wide world over. I stood motionless, that I might drink in the rich strains. The tune, enunciated with the rare stridency of the best steam-organs, was that exquisite old Viennese waltz—“Wein, Weib und Gesang.” Wine, Woman and Song—surely these themes are eternal, whether by Danube or by Nile, by Theme or by Thames. Whereas the petty annoyances of a County Court are but temporal.

The instrument had a front like a church organ. It radiated pipes, while at one side was a miniature drum and also a serviceable pair of cymbals. It was mounted upon a four-wheeled chassis, and the handle whereby it operated was formidable as a winch. Pinned to the super-structure were photographs of a gallant sailor and two flashing artillerymen, the originals whereof, now less bravely arrayed, I engaged in conversation. They told me that the machine was made in Belgium, had cost £160, and weighed 14 cwt. without the

In Bloomsbury

chassis; that the music-rolls, made on the principle of the dobby-cards on a loom, cost from three pounds to eight, that on a fine day their earnings "might be round about twelve shillings each with a bite of food thrown in." Well, they deserved it, for having so sensibly invested their gratuities. Say £3 a week, the hire of a tolerable essayist! For a shilling they let me have a turn at the winch, and I know now that there are more arduous tasks than essay-writing. I performed the whole of a tune which has often intrigued me at the circus, and the name of which eludes me still. It was undecipherable on the well-worn card, and the boys did not know it.

As I walked up Great Portland Street arm-weary yet refreshed, I noticed that the rain had stopped and the fog lifted. Opposite the Green Man a scavenger was shovelling muck into a barrow. As he bent to his spade his jacket yawned, and disclosed a belt of bright vermilion webbing on which was embroidered in brilliant blue :—LOVE FROM JENNY. As the man straightened himself, the words disappeared from view, as he bent they reappeared. And my heart gave a great leap; there was nothing intermittent, I knew, about the passion of the embroiderer. The man's back was towards me, and I could stand and drink in the colour without discourtesy. The sun shot a beam to my aid. Blue upon vermilion! Vermilion under blue! "*Salut au Monde!*" I cried, or something very like it. I gave, interiorly, the old Whitmanesque whaup. The earth, I felt, was

White Horse and Red Lion

sufficient, and I did not want the constellations any nearer. Until the scavenger shifted his barrow I did not move. When, at length, I must mend my way my ears were filled with diminishing strains of Offenbach's *Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*. But of the splendour of that belt there was no lessening. Across the brilliant blue of the now opening heavens by some trick of eye or mind I could spell in irregular letters the legend: LOVE FROM JENNY. God, I felt, was where He ought to be—on earth. All was right with Bloomsbury.

Exit “ Kid ” Lewis

Exit "Kid" Lewis

BRITISH sportsmen are the most chivalrous in the world, so much so that the "three cheers for the loser" which it is their custom to give are hardly distinguishable in heartiness, though necessarily in exultation, from those given for the winner.

Now picture the scene in the Albert Hall at the end of the fight between Ted (Kid) Lewis and Roland Todd for the Middle-Weight Championship of Great Britain. The contest had gone the full distance—twenty rounds of assault furious enough to have pleased Corporal Trim, and of defence sound enough to have satisfied my Uncle Toby.

Not even the most ardent supporters of Lewis could have had any doubts as to the verdict. But since to err is human and the best of referees are but mortal, it was wise to wait until the master of ceremonies had clambered into the ring. Then Mr. Palmer, jacketless, very hot and very tired, pointed to Todd's corner, seized the M.C. by the arm, and shouted something in his ear. But I doubt whether the master of ceremonies heard; that communication was for ever drowned in a roar of universal approval.

Todd's seconds were all expectancy; Roland himself was on tiptoe, and for the first time during an hour and twenty minutes of battle, betrayed excitement. In a flash quicker than the quickest

White Horse and Red Lion

of Lewis's rushes, he was across the ring holding out the glove, which the Aldgate man refused to take. Lewis deliberately turned his back; his supporters tried to turn him round, but the beaten man refused. The victor had been chaired and carried from the ring, and still Lewis remained in his corner, and you could see that he was crying. And then arose a storm of boos and hisses. I have seen many, many fights, but this is the first time within my experience that the vanquished boxer has met with scorn openly expressed. Lucky for Lewis that this was the Albert Hall and the twentieth century. In the Roman arena he would have fared ill.

It was not that the loser had not fought pluckily. He had so fought. He had run the whole gamut of courage, beginning with the lion's—in the first round he leaped and flung himself upon Todd as though the man were some stripling bar to freedom—then to the terrier's, wiry and pertinacious, and last to the rat's. In the final stages of the fight Lewis tried every dodge which is not boxing. He held, crooked his arm so that his opponent could not free his glove, lay on his man, bored with his head—all without attempt at concealment and almost as though he were inviting disqualification. Indeed, I must think that Mr. Palmer refrained in justice to Todd, preferring that this fine and fair fighter should not be robbed by a decision on a foul of the full reward of his magnificent and uncontrovertible victory. Kid Lewis was disgraced, not because he was beaten,

Exit "Kid" Lewis

but because of his methods and because he failed to take his beating like a man. Let it not be said that Jews are not sportsmen. I have admired many Jew boxers, and always for their courage, skill, and gallantry. I was at the ring-side throughout the fight in the middle of a knot of the wealthier residents of Aldgate and Whitechapel, all of whom were eloquent of disapproval. "Let the Kid lose, if he must," they said, "but he should lose fairly."

It is the custom to declare that "everybody who is anybody" was present. Certainly, outside the hall, there was a great aggregation of people who seemed to be nobody—the usual hordes of larrikins and roughs. As I pushed my way in and took my seat in what was to be Lewis's corner, a minor fight was in progress in a violet light so violent as to hurt the eyes. In the glare I could dimly discern at the ring-side, Mr. Arnold Bennett, ventripotent, heavy with unborn masterpieces; Jimmy Wilde, no longer frail and looking as though he would never be reared, but snug and round like some Lilliputian alderman; Dick Smith, magnificently discontented with Beckett's repeated disasters.

But most I noticed that the courtesans present had not learned the art of make-up for the peculiar light of the boxing-ring. Just as blood on a boxer's cheek is no longer red but orange-tawny, so rouge stands out like some jaundiced bull's-eye on a target. Peroxide stains the hair, not to gold but to a sickly brass, and Titian-red degenerates to the domestic carrot. Women, at the ring-side, look their worst. *Æsthetically* they are out of place; and

White Horse and Red Lion

not even extraordinary beauty may brazen it out successfully.

There was nothing of physical horror to shock the squeamish ; very little, even, of drama. There was nothing, for instance, of that aspect of the beaten boxer going down to defeat, from whose face all natural, human expression has been driven so that his countenance resembles a death's-head spouting blood. There was nothing of the mingled terror and admiration which Moran, tottering to ruin before Beckett, invoked.

Except that Lewis's left eye was pouched early on, you might have thought that the boxers wore masks. Lewis, indeed, wears a mask in very sooth. As he sat at rest in his corner before the fight began, gorgeous in a dressing-gown of purple and gold, he looked positively debonair, and, full face, curiously like the late George Alexander, with a hint of Cyril Maude. He smiled and chatted whilst he wound those interminable bandages, now and again throwing a look at the opposite corner which seemed to suggest that the Jewish gentlemen offering twenty-seven and a half to ten on Todd were over sanguine. Todd, in a khaki wrap, looked the cool Cockney, certain of his methods and his man.

Lewis's record of 135 victories, of which 52 had been by the knock-out route, and 12 defeats, including three knock-outs, seemed the more imposing. But Todd had behind him an absolutely unbeaten record, save for that very doubtful decision on points registered against him by the Aldgate

Exit "Kid" Lewis

man last year. Once in the ring Lewis dropped his polite mask, and took on an aspect of cold fury like one of Gustave Doré's less prepossessing demons.

I shall not describe the fight in detail. It never varied from start to finish. Lewis would try to draw Todd and get him into such a position that he could deliver the famous right-hand swing, which he did with a high round-arm delivery like Tom Richardson bowling on a plumb wicket. But he never found Todd at the other end. There was no obvious evasion of the blow; Roland just happened to be somewhere else.

But when you reflected how many other good boxers had been found "at home" to their undoing, you realised that Todd was of that great order of boxers who prefer not getting into awkward corners to the most skilful extrications. Only once did Lewis land his punch, and then Todd, moving his head backwards, took less than half the blow, grinned at Lewis's friends in that slow way of his, and amiably dug the Aldgate man in the ribs, in a fashion, however, which the other cannot have found jocular.

For every good-looking Oliver sent over by Lewis, Todd returned a more than useful Roland. "You can't miss him!" Lewis's supporters would shout, and if they meant that Lewis had only to go in to bump his head against Todd's left, they were right. In fact, Lewis could not keep his face out of the way, and Todd's ultimate pile of points must have amounted to a modest competence. Towards the end the winner led as he liked.

White Horse and Red Lion

In a way, I was not sorry at the result. Lewis owed me at least twenty rounds. I had not forgotten the occasion when I so nearly saw him at Manchester. It was in 1920. As I entered the Free Trade Hall, Lewis and Frankie Moody were entering the ring. As I bent down to stuff my hat and coat under the chair the men were squaring up. As I raised my head I saw Moody on the floor and Lewis holding his fist vainglorious in the air. The fight had lasted $8\frac{3}{4}$ seconds.

In the bout I have described Lewis's fist was a hundred times held furiously aloft, threatening high heaven, and having failed to encounter Todd's chin *en route*. That genial youth was unmoved, but the Albert Hall smiled.

In a Music-Hall

In a Music-Hall

To young hopeful with five shillings in his pocket and unlimited credit in the bank of optimism "Holborn" spells a houseful of furniture and a perambulator. To the elderly, who need not Drage, it stands for a lavish banqueting-hall, where the Freemason may drown his sorrows. For me, with a foot in either camp, it means the joy of life *tout court*, whose hub is that jolliest of music-halls, the Holborn Empire. Always I include it in my list of the Seven Wonders of the World. And not so foolishly either. Some of the jokes come down to us from the days of the Pyramids; were you permitted to drink your bottle of Bass upon the little balcony overlooking the streets the parallel with the hanging gardens of Babylon would be perfect; and I deny categorically that any priestess of Diana at Ephesus can have been more fetching than Toots Pounds.

If only that young lady's aunt or mother, or whatever the cousinage may be, would realise how much better the rôle of foil suits her than the unconvincing one of compeer. Disparity, thy name is Lorna! Let her not fear that—Shakespeare puts it a trifle better than I can contrive at the moment—let Lorna not fear that to the blown rose they will stop their nose that kneel unto the bud. When this compatible actress, taking a deep breath, blows herself out in imitation of Mr. Oscar Asche,

White Horse and Red Lion

she is perfect. When she makes a mock at youth she is adorable. When she invites Toots to frisk and gambol at her skirts like a lamb in April, we take her to our hearts. But let her not caper too.

I do not hold with broadcasting ; it is new-fangled. I come of Conservative stock. My father set his face against the motor-car, his father against the railway-train. Nothing shall inure me to the aeroplane, which seems to me to be flying in the face of Providence. And, above all, I will have no truck with wireless; let me drown in mid-ocean first. The wise man should do his broadcasting in his own mind. Say that I must spend an evening by my fireside—which happens, you know, even to the dramatic critic—do I tamely endure the belch and vomit of a tin trumpet ? No, I close my eyes, turn on the wave-lengths of memory, and let the ghosts of voices speak to me in what order they will. The first, invariably, is that of George Bass. With the voice comes the picture ; with that soft, South Lancashire accent, cousin to George Formby's, there appears on my mental screen the vision of a foolish cranium, a sleek thatching of red hair, a tooth-brush moustache, and an imperfect mastery of the salivary glands. “ Am I spitting on you, Stan-er-ly ? ” he will inquire of the conductor anxiously. I know his song will begin—

“ ’Istry, they say, repeats itself,
And so does steak and onions.”

In a Music-Hall

I know the succession, how the farmer seemly cuts his corn but will have nothing to do with your bunions, how . . . But let me not steal Jove's thunder, nor the popping of Mr. Bass's corks.

Nellie Wallace is the next of my fireside "turns." How is it that these twain have never married? Her mannishness and George's femininity are the perfect complement. Whenever I think of Nellie I am afire, like Paris for Helen, Troilus for Cressida, or any other inflammable fellow. Had that nose been arched but ten degrees less superbly, my suit might have better fared. Still I would wait at Nellie's stage-door, I would cry out loud:

"Hang there my soul like fruit, till the tree die!"

were it not that I fear the divinity might strangle me with her bedraggled boa, or stab me with that quivering stiletto which, in her hat, terminates in twin melancholy blooms. I have, indeed, waited for this goddess under wan gas-lamps, and been rewarded with a look. That, as Browning says, pays a thousand pains. There's a next world and who knows? What's death? Nellie, you'll love me yet!

Next I see one of those musical evenings at the Baronet's. To judge by his white tie and the puce, ochre, bottle-green and gamboge confessions of his four daughters, the poor lady, their mother, has been dead some time. It is after dinner, the standard lamps are lighted, and the standard palms look down benignly upon coffee

White Horse and Red¹ Lion

and liqueurs. Mabel, at the piano, is taking off her rings, Gladys cuddles her fiddle. Eva makes unbashful advances to her 'cello. Harriet wields no bow, but she has a voice, and, being strong of foot, fills in on occasion with the harmonium. "Ora pro Nobis," they begin in unison, as though they were saying grace after a dinner-party at the Borgias. Gladys, with "Salut d'Amour," reminds us that when fame claimed Sir Edward Elgar as a composer it sacrificed the prince of pot-boilers. Harriet cultivates roses in Picardy. Eva, in some "Moto Perpetuo," by the sprightly Popper, gives a credible imitation of a relay race.

And all this time the Baronet has been moving uneasily from chair to chair. Can it be that he will not be asked to sing? He clears his throat provocatively, and at length the quartette turns to him in mute appeal. "Some little thing!" they dumbly urge, and "Won't you, papa, just for once?" And won't he just! For ten minutes by the clock he fumbles for his lost chord, trowls the bonny bowl and owes not any man. And now the lights are lowered; one single gleam, sinister as the eye of Franklin Dyall, is concentrated upon the piano, and we fear the worst. Mabel, her hands poised above the keyboard, is strung up taut as an Amazon who should be employed at the abattoirs. Crash upon crash, bang upon wallop! The scene is strewn with beeves, and the stage runs gore. In plain English Mabel has brought her pole-axe down upon the head of poor Rachmaninov, bloody, but, we must believe, unbowed, since he comes up

In a Music-Hall

smiling fourteen times a week. Hardly have the thunders of applause died away before the lights go up, and we are fox-trotting back to Alabam.

And then the vision fades a little, and the voice in my ears comes to me wistfully, as from a great distance. It is hoarse now, coarsened almost out of recognition. And I remember that at its brightest and most silvery, it had ever the coster resonance of one who, in the New Cut, could have held her own. I see a dumpy little figure, unsteady upon tiny feet, gather with tiny hands a red shawl across a distressed bosom. The poor soul has "come over queer." First, she tells you, she goes hot, then cold, and then a kind of goosey. But she will be all right, girls, in a minute. The band waits, the figure on the stage visibly pulls itself together, and I hear to an unforgettable lilt the old words,—

" My old man
Said, ' Follow the van,
Don't dilly-dally on the w'y! '
Orf went the van with the old 'ome in it,
I walked be'ind with me old cock-linnet.
I dillied and dallied, dallied and dillied,
Lorst me w'y and dunno where to roam,
For you can't trust the speshuls like the old-
time coppers
When you can't find your w'y 'ome."

Well, there may be a next world and who knows ?
Marie, we'll love you still!

White Horse and Red Lion

I sit up stiffly in my chair. For here is Ella Shields straight as a ram-rod, whose Burlington Bertie, prince of shreds and patches, has just strolled in from the Thames Embankment. I hear him at the horse-sale, after the duke has bidden ten thousand, bid good morning. I hear that exquisitely careful, common English, and I see in fancy that slow, confident smile. She it is, and poor Marie, who for me are contained in the word "Holborn."

A King of Egypt

A King of Egypt

*If you could bring her glories back !
You gentle sirs who sift the dust
And burrow in the mould and must
Of Babylon for bric-a-brac ;
Who catalogue and pigeon-hole
The faded splendours of her soul,
And put her greatness under glass,
If you could bring her past to pass !*
Babylon.—RALPH HODGSON.

TIME will not tell ; Eternity may. Either we have committed sacrilege in rifling the tomb of Tutankh-Amen, or body-snatching is a legitimate amusement. It all depends upon whether God's in His heaven or not.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are as a moment gone. . . .

By the Christian reckoning, then, Tutankh-Amen has been dead less than three minutes, and with spats upon our insteps and a joke upon our lips we descend into his tomb.

To pretend that the fuss is determined by archæological importance is, of course, the purest humbug. When did women care for these things ? Women—with the possible exception of metaphysical Miss May Sinclair and metaphrastical Dr. Marie Stopes—are immune from the abstract. To them Tutankh-Amen is a "dear," or he isn't. They are flocking to Luxor to find out.

I have no excuse for tackling this matter save that whom it pleases to be a journalist must write

White Horse and Red Lion

of the things that please. And to gain our living we must connive in robbing the dead, write smart, nippy little articles, and make smart, nippy little puns—Toot and Kum in. When the last trump sounds and the Angel, as the penny press would approve me for putting it, bids us "Come aht of it!" it would not surprise me to find that the Egyptian preparation for the long journey was as practical as our own. We do not know, beyond doubt, that Tutankh-Amen has no need of that stuffed duck. Time will not tell me whether that which follows here is in the vilest taste or a lawful expedient to help me to a few more hours of living. Perhaps it is both! In face of the eternities, good taste may not matter all that much.

After reading every available scrap of print bearing upon the excavations at Luxor, I have come to the conclusion that Tutankh-Amen is dead. Dead as a door-nail, and not on this earth to be resuscitated by any discoveries whatsoever. For all these marvellously-preserved treasures of the past tell us nothing whatever of Tutankh-Amen himself. This withered bouquet may reveal to the botanist the unchanging glory of the rose—how the stamens and anthers of to-day have altered no whit throughout the blossomings of three thousand years—but it does not tell us what flowers the dead king picked, nor to what dusky slave or fair princess he offered them.

It may be that the tomb will reveal matters long-hidden from the knowledge of man: the methods used in building the pyramids, showing how without

A King of Egypt

cranes those huge blocks of stone came to be piled one upon another, the strange process whereby bricks were made without straw. It may be that the most secret chamber of all will reveal not only the body of the king, but the lost books of the Sibyl. But even these would tell us nothing of the once living and breathing Tutankh-Amen.

I am continually disappointed with the things they bring out of the tomb. That couch in hippopotamus-hide lacquered with thin gold, whose head-rest is shaped in the fashion of some fleet hound, forgotten winner of the Tel-el-Kebir Cup—this Royal couch moves me in wonder no whit more than that early Victorian horse-hair sofa with the impregnable bolster, whereon my great-grandmother was wont to take her ease. Both are equally impersonal. One speaks to me of all great-grandmothers, the other of all Egyptian kings. But I get no hint of Tutankh-Amen, when and where he reposed, or after what labours or delights. He is as much forgotten as if his slumbers had never been disturbed, and sleeps in dull cold marble, or sand-stone, as immune from human mention as if he has never existed. “Tutankh-Amen” is really only a label to figure henceforward on a little ticket in a museum. “Malachite table presented by the Sultan of Turkey to the Sixth Duke,” they reel off to you at Chatsworth. Tutankh-Amen is no more than second or fourth or sixth of his line.

In so far as the tomb continues to bring forth only the expected, I am disillusioned. If only

White Horse and Red Lion

Mr. Howard Carter could draw forth some such thing as a bicycle, if only of the bone-shaker type! Or put his hand on a gramophone-horn, or a wireless receiver, or even a board covered with rude crowns and quaint anchors! I am persuaded that many of our boasted discoveries were known to those nimble and royal wits. But even if a complete set of Pharaoh's Regulations were discovered, with instructions about the thumbs of the Royal Body-guard being in line with the seam of whatever leg-covering the Egyptian private wore—even *Phar.'s Regs.* would tell me nothing about the poor little king himself.

To say sooth, the tomb at Luxor discovers to us less about Tutankh-Amen than his bachelor's den tells us of Bobby Binks who, it happens, is out playing football. In the modern instance we can reconstruct our young friend from the things he leaves lying about. Here is the photograph of his mother and sisters, there that of the little lady, serene and sweet as an English vicarage garden, whom he will probably marry. The next frame shows the picture of an enchantress far, far beyond Bobby's matrimonial ken, no less a person than Miss Binty Footle, of the Frivolity, destined by the stars, and seconded by Mr. John Tiller's Dancing Academy, featly to adorn our peerage. On the table is a copy of *If Winter Comes*, with the reader's "place" carefully marked by an urgent communication from those obliging gentlemen, Messrs Jackal and Skinner. I take a glance, and find that if Bobby will sign a further

A King of Egypt

promissory note for £100, a further £40 will be sent him in cash. (Note: Bobby will.)

In the corner a cricket bat with a date in ink—Bobby's first century—and a bag of golf clubs, by the make and feel of which I put Bobby on the six mark—four if there is no wind blowing from the left, to abet that ineradicable slice. (There is a bit of "hook" on the wooden clubs to counteract this.) Bobby smokes a good tobacco. Oh, yes, I know all about Bobby, his family, loves, friends, sports, interests, and desires. Wherefore I realise that in spite of all the chariots and the emblems, the chairs, and the couches, the coffers and the shrines, the jewels and the ceremonial robes, I know nothing, nor ever shall know anything that matters, of Tutankh-Amen. Wherefore I say that Tutankh-Amen, King of Egypt, is dead.

What I must know of the old boy before he can come to life again is who his queen was and whether he really liked her, or, secretly, doted upon one of her handmaidens; what like his chums were; to what wolfish financiers he had recourse; what games he played, and what books he read. If only these excavators could bring to light a copy of Ay-Ess-Em Hutchinson's best seller of the period: *If Sahara Deserts*. If only . . . a score of things! I read how a chair was brought forth made of ebony inlaid with ivory. "It is smaller than the throne, and is possibly the State seat of the king's child," writes an expert. But that, for me, brings not the king's child to life. He is not so much alive to my imagination as Bobby Binks's unborn son

White Horse and Red Lion

and heir. He is, in fact, dead, and dead long ago. So, too, is his father, Tutankh-Amen.

In short, Tutankh-Amen is dead; quite, quite dead.

What is Immortality? And is it the same thing as Survival? Is Tutankh-Amen immortal merely because a few archæologists have unearthed his mummy and his furniture? Can Rameses II. be said to survive merely because we read of his day and dynasty in a few hardly decipherable hieroglyphics? Lord Balfour has said in his *Foundations of Belief* that one day it will be with this earth as though Man, with all his aspirations and his ardours, his loves, endurances and sacrifices, had never existed. Both immortality and survival are in for a thin time, it would seem, so soon as this planet shall have made up its mind about cooling. For we have come to regard both as being, somehow, connected with human memory.

“Remember thee!

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe,”

was Hamlet's promise. While memory holds a seat, mark, but no longer. Can the spirit of a human being remain immortal on that dismal day when there shall be no more human beings to remember him? Suppose some wandering sun should bump into Earth? What then will happen to the immortal memories of Antony and Cleopatra, Ptolemy and Cæsar, Alfred the Great and Napoleon, you, dear reader, and me?

A King of Egypt

The fame of this Egyptian potentate is really quite spurious, as any must be which is based not upon a man's own achievements but upon the lacquer of his best bedstead. Tutankh-Amen, I read, was a harmless monarch cutting about as little ice as our own second Edward or third Henry. He has really no title to be remembered for anything by anybody. But the fact that he was nobody in particular, except, of course, a member of a dynasty, probably did not prevent him from wanting to be somebody after he was dead. Or he may very well have been satisfied, poor fellow, with the idea of going on being nobody in particular, for ever and ever, throughout eternity. The great poets are full of this very human desire for perpetuity. Sometimes when, like Shakespeare, they don't quite see how a man is to pull it off in his own person, they give him recipes and nostrums for acquiring immortality in the person of his child.

“Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
So thou through windows of thine age shall see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.”

In other words, “Get married!” But Tutankh-Amen had no idea, apparently, of living over again in his son. He wanted to live again in his own puny, pompous, preposterous, funny little self. Well, he is dead; although I have not the least doubt that we shall shortly be getting messages from him in mediumistic circles Streatham and Brixton way—whereas Smithers is very much alive.

White Horse and Red Lion

It was in a private bar at a house of entertainment, where self and friend were taking our Saturday night's ease, that the incident which I am about to record took place. It was getting near closing-time, and those whom our absurd licensing-laws force to drink too quickly had evidently borne in mind the old maxim about too much being as good as a feast, and enough as bad as a meal. In other words, the company was a trifle inclined to be fractious, the ladies as well as the gentlemen. And then, of a sudden, the whole bar burst into an uproar. I forget what the matter of dispute was ; in fact, I do not think that I ever perfectly apprehended it. High words were suddenly bandied; two soldiers slipped their belts in workmanlike preparation ; an old lady cocked her bonnet over a truculent eye. The barman looked scared, whilst I, personally, wished I had persisted with that system of deep breathing and morning massage.

"I did, at one time, think of taking up ju-jitsu," said my friend, with an air of detachment.

But all these alarums and excursions came to nothing. For suddenly, from nowhere, there appeared a figure neither particularly tall nor particularly muscular, nor in any way intimidating, who, diving into the crowd, parted it without the least show of difficulty.

"Just stop this," the young man said, with quiet authority.

Then, turning to a huge mountain of a man

A King of Egypt

of the Cumberland-wrestler, heavy-weight boxer, village-blacksmith order, he went on:—

“ I’ve ’ad to speak to you before. It’s no use your kicking up a row in ’ere, every Setterday night, so don’t let’s ’ave no more of it.”

“ All right, old man ; never meant no ’arm ! ” said the Colossus, quite, quite subdued.

And at once peace and harmony reigned again.

“ Who is that young man ? ” I ventured to ask a loafer.

“ That’s Smithers, of course ! ”

“ And who is Mr. Smithers ? ” I asked.

The loafer’s eyes grew round as saucers.

“ That’s *the* Smithers,” he said, “ ’Im wot pl’ys ’arf-back for Chelsea.”

At once I remembered that we were in lusty England, not in musty, mouldy, well-preserved Egypt, but in living, breathing, and football-playing England. Next I realised that immortality is no good to anybody when he is dead, that the best use one can make of it is to possess it whilst one is yet alive. And finally I realised that when Ecclesiastes preferred a live dog above a dead lion, he knew what he was talking about.

The Battle of the Squares

The Battle of the Squares

It will not be surprising if on future maps of England Edwardes Square and Kensington Square, two of London's residential quarters, are marked with crossed swords like Bannockburn and Marston Moor. In each case the cause of the conflict which raged in the public press of this country, November, 1922 to March, 1923, was the same—new methods against old manners, the pleasures of the many against the privileges of the few, a people against a principle, *Philistia versus Amenity*.

Now the Philistines were ever to my mind an ill-used race, a jolly folk whose only fault was that they disputed the sovereignty of Canaan with the Israelites—a quarrel, moreover, of which we hear only one side. Amenity, my dictionary tells me, is not a race but a quality—that of being “pleasant or agreeable, in respect of situation, climate, etc.” Yes, but agreeable to whom? Therein lies the whole point. My experience is that the clerk or shop-girl who wants to play lawn-tennis in Hyde Park is called a Philistine; whilst smart ladies and dapper gentlemen who, on that sward, and calling themselves toxophilites, amuse themselves with bows and arrows, are priests and priestesses of Amenity. (I believe this fellow was really an Egyptian deity—Amen-Iti, the God of Snobs.)

The causes of battle are these. Shall Edwardes Square have a cinema? Shall Kensington Square

White Horse and Red Lion

have a garage? Let me take each conflict separately. Edwardes Square, lying immediately behind Earl's Terrace, a row of houses with less charm about them than the barracks at Knightsbridge, is a quadrilateral composed of a melancholy garden furnished with lachrymose willows, two rows of pleasant houses, one row of plainish studios, and a fourth row of backs belonging to the aforesaid, charmless Earl's Terrace.

It appears that in the summer time these gardens are no longer melancholy, that artists with pale thin hands and pale thin beards come out at eve and make night and the willows gaudy with Chinese lanterns. Then, drinking pale thin China tea with floating half-moons of lemon, and to the distant whisperings of the motor-buses, they debate whether two wan triangles and a sickly cube were better styled "Koussevitsky Conducting the Ninth Symphony" or "The Postponements of Joe Beckett."

In one of the pleasant houses lived for eleven years Leigh Hunt, the friend of Lamb and Hazlitt, and Dickens's model for Harold Skimpole. Voluble Protestants have written to our more august journals to plead on behalf of the sanctities of Edwardes Square that Addison and Sir Walter Scott were wont to visit at Holland House, on the other side of the way, out of eye-shot. Suddenly some enemy of polite mankind proposes to erect a cinema, to amuse with pictures, church organ, good strong tea, and stout, robust dancing, some three thousand of the vulgar herd, non-artists,

The Battle of the Squares

plain people like you, reader, and me! Horrible thought! Three times a day three thousand unwashed hooligans—for so we are described—will assemble, and, watching those pictures and listening to that church organ, make morning, noon, and night hideous, and take from life in Edwardes Square its thinness and its pallor.

Well, personally, I am unable to regard this as an extreme calamity. It so happens that hooligans delight me as they delighted Lamb, that I adore all bookies, prize-fighters, race-course touts, pick-pockets, all rogues and ruffians below the rank of a silk hat, and would rather make friends with a jockey who won his master's race than with a duke who merely propagated his own. I, personally, would love to live above a church organ, and pine for a flat in the Waterloo Road. Let me waive these unwashed predilections, and consider those of the genteel residents of this old square. They want to keep themselves "to" themselves, to avoid the "cad," to cherish the memory of people who never lived in the square at all! And so they protest that a cinema "isn't wanted."

Not wanted by whom? An enterprising gentleman is willing to bet ten, twenty, thirty thousand pounds that three thousand people want it. How much is Edwardes Square prepared to bet? It does not seem to occur to our æsthetes that possibly the three thousand who are to be rejoiced by those pictures and that church organ may make up for the two or three memories which will be outraged thereby, or even that

White Horse and Red Lion

the spirit of Leigh Hunt may not be so utterly disquieted. They should remember that Hunt's friend, Lamb, declared the pit of a London theatre to be worth all the hills and mountains that ever skipped! The inditers of letters to the Press should reflect that the place where stands the offices of their beloved journal was once a field, and that the expansion of their views is worth more than dandelions.

In Kensington Square the proposal is to demolish the houses on the north side for the purpose of building warehouses. A garage is spoken of, and the means whereby one of our great shops may park its motor-vans.

Well, here I am definitely on the side of the Amenities. It was Kensington which made the shop, and not the shop which made Kensington. Kensington wishes should be respected. One sympathises with the great business concern. It wants, quite naturally, to expand. It has already secured so many odd and outlying houses that its name is spread sporadically all over that little corner. It has a quite proper desire for unity. Perhaps, even, it wants to save its motor-drivers trouble. Were I a director of that admirable concern I should very much want those new premises. But I hope, too, that I should reflect that in grabbing them I should be disturbing not the tomb of an isolated memory, but a whole graveyard. Kensington Square is a complete menagerie of dead lions—Talleyrand, John Stuart Mill, John Richard Green, Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Its little

The Battle of the Squares

inn, of which I forget the name—let me call it The Naboth's Head—is mentioned in *Esmond*, and round the corner in Young Street is the exquisite little bow-windowed house where Thackeray lived.

Whether the L.C.C. have any say in the destiny of Kensington Square I know not; the battle may yet come to a private tug-of-war—pull residents, pull Barker. General Cinema is winning the battle of Edwardes Square; the field of Kensington is still disputed, and I am not quite sure that I want it to be won by General Garage.

And now I have two suggestions to make. Will not the victor of Edwardes Square put up a *beautiful* cinema, a building which shall be a joy to the eye? It will cost him no more than an ugly one. Will not the directors of that great shop buy Thackeray's house and present it to the nation? Kensington, I feel sure, would reward this graceful gesture.

Hither and Dither

Hither and Dither

“AND don’t forget to change the books at Mudie’s.” To how many children, I wonder, has this been a familiar injunction? The duty devolved upon me as the eldest of the family, and was performed on the return from school. The books were always three in number, neatly parcelled by means of a leather strap with a handle—one seldom sees such contrivances now—and placed by my plate at breakfast or given into my hand as I was despatched to school. A list of those to be demanded in exchange was slipped under the strap. How well I remember the assortment: the *Memoirs* or *Travels* for my father, and two of the three volumes of a novel for my mother. *Darkest Africa* was the only one of these books I was ever permitted to read. The novels were rigorously proscribed, with the exception of a maudlin little story called *Misunderstood*; and I remember wondering how my mother could take delight in that which was represented as being beyond any possible moral pale. Once only did I transgress, falling before a title: *My Sister the Actress*. How could any child be expected to resist a lure so impossibly romantic? The glamour of the stage is the natural successor to toy-soldiers and the toy-theatre. To the mature all the world’s a stage; to the adolescent the stage is all the world. I do not remember anything of the story; I fancy vaguely that it was by

White Horse and Red Lion

a Miss Florence Marryat. I shall take no steps to verify this ; an imperishable belief in that patchoulie'd work as the masterpiece of this writer is one of childhood's most precious legacies. *My Sister the Actress !* What's in a title ? And yet I do not think that I had fallen at the beck of *My Sister the Seamstress*. No one will ever get full measure out of the theatre who has been brought up to regard it as a place of lawful entertainment. To children the theatre is a palace of forbidden delight. To the children of poverty actors and actresses are gods and goddesses, radiant, unattainable, beyond mortal conjecture.

Unconjecturable, yes ; but beyond the last hope unattainable, no. Just as there is always in the mind of the small boy the chance that he may be chosen king and carried to the balcony to address his loving subjects like the sixth Edward in *Little Arthur's History of England*—if not in this childish book, then in another ; again I will not verify—so there is always the possibility that the scullery-maid may one day become the impossible she of her dreams. Without this heaven remotely glimpsed life below-stairs were unlivable for these little drabs.

Some such train of thought occupied my mind as, one day in June, I took my seat opposite a little maid at the beginning of a journey from Manchester to London. Her store of beguiling literature was a simple volume entitled *Norman Coronets or Made for the Stage*. And at once my heart went out to her. It took a little time after the train had moved off before she could compose herself and settle

Hither and Dither

down to a "good read." This, ultimately, I knew she must. She read in the dreary, dull-seeming way of her class, but I knew from the impatient wetting of her thumb that the author was holding her. She got out at Rugby, and in the bustle of departure dropped her book. After the train had started again I found it on the floor. I picked it up and began to read.

Now I suppose there are people who call such a faëry realm as that of which I was then made free a farrago of nonsense. Yet not the greatest of poets has invented islands more splendidly magical than the fairyland of this novelette to the proper reader. What's Prospero to a maid that chares?

Arrived at my rooms, I found an editorial note asking me to "cover" a theatrical garden party. You know the kind of "copy" required, twaddle to reassure timid old ladies that the player is no longer rogue and vagabond. A chatty something which shall not betray intimacy, the hang of the *coulisses*, or the trick of the stage-door. Something enslimed with tolerance. . . .

Under special favour I have succeeded in never setting foot in an actor's dressing-room. I would be spared insights into secrets I am not bound to know. I have no desire to pry into the home life of actors. In this it cannot be that I am like the rest of the human race, the greater part of which seemed, that afternoon, bent upon scrambling into the Royal Hospital Gardens. It is the fashion to represent these parties as *fêtes galantes*, in which Watteau-ish ladies walk spacious

White Horse and Red Lion

lawns and take the courtly airs with beauty. But, alas! Hampstead Heath on a hot Bank Holiday were nearer the truth. Military bands, hurdy-gurdies, nigger orchestras rend the over-scented air. The graceful temples which should be the abode of goddesses take on the likeness of booths at a fair. Othello roars that in his alley you may play at skittles; Cleopatra tells your fortune if you cross her palm; in the course of charity you may play butcher to some swealing duchess. She who is Raphael's embodiment of innocency would bend your gaze upon the smirking images of Mary and of Doug, whose portraits she hawks for a shilling. He whose voice shall nightly plump unfathomable deeps of heroic passion now bays his ragtime fancy to the moon. A royal mummer puts on Mad Hatter's guise, and threadbare wears the divinity of kings. I wandered hither and thither, marvelling at the general sacrifice, and longing for the hour when these so-called revels should cease and these creatures of disillusion be spirited back from this unreal world to that other in which they wield so sovereign a sceptre. Repelled by the crowd and its unfarded realism, I sought the shade of a friendly beech-tree wreathing its old fantastic roots so high, and preparing to nod, after the poetic manner of beech-trees, so soon as there should be a breath stirring. I closed my eyes; the too-substantial pageant faded, melted into thin air. . . .

Once again I must think that I am not one with my fellows. For there can be no doubt that the

Hither and Dither

general public reads with the avidity of a sick man for a tainted dish the stuff of our gossips and publicity-mongers. I dreamt that, returning to my rooms, I found a second telegram from my editor to the effect that the industrious bee whose function it was to gather honey for the column of theatrical and society gossip had died suddenly from a cloying surfeit. Would I draft a few notes? An hour later I had concocted the following :—

DITHERINGS

BY DAPHNE

Owing to her engagement to Lord Roquefort, who is, of course, the Marquis of Stilton's only son, Miss Binty Footle is resigning her part in *Tickle Toes* to Miss Minty Tootle. Miss Tootle tells me she intends to present the character from a different angle. Instead of her predecessor's "They're off, girls!" she will read the part as "Girls, they're off!" Binty hopes to settle down quietly at Parings, a loss the lyric stage can ill afford.

Lady Cynthia Rotherhithe, who has hitherto hated walking because her feet were painful told me she walks miles since wearing arch-supporting shoes from Instep's fine footwear palace, 547B Oxford Street. The comfort, she says, is indescribable after the depressingness of toe torture.

White Horse and Red Lion

I met Lady Gracenote yesterday afternoon returning from a smart funeral in Soho. She was looking wonderfully cheerful in a *pleureuse* of the old-fashioned weeping-willow pattern, edged with the new "Niobe's Tears" beading, made of course by the Eclat Company. She was accompanied by her two daughters, Lady Dalcrozia, who is a votary of Thalia, or do I mean Melpomene?—anyhow she is very fond of dancing—and Lady Drivel, who is of a more serious turn of mind. The latter has a novel in the press, *Fairings in May*, which will, I understand, cause a flutter in one or two dovecotes.

I regularly model mine and Tiny's lunch—Tiny is your Daphne's ownest hubby—on "Gourmette's" Dainty Home Menus. They are *so* inexpensive and *no* trouble to prepare. Take yesterday's—

Plovers' Eggs.
Asparagus Soup.
Quails.
Fraises Réjane.

Satisfying, yet economical.

Last night's *première* at the Modesty was of a sensational description. In the stalls I noticed the Vicomte Pierre de la Kerbe and Lady Paving,

Hither and Dither

Mr. Chesapeake Shannon, of Dollar, N.B., Mr. Llewellyn Pen-Y-Gaf, the famous Welsh actor, Mdlle. Mignonette de Réséda, the famous *lionne comique*, Madame Tierra del Fuego, the charming song-writer, Mr. Hackney of the Marshes, and The Balbriggan, just from Scotland. A grand tier box was more than occupied by Mr. Finckel Funckenstein, just *not* from Scotland, and Mr. Oscar Frauenzimmer from Kiel, looking as charming as ever behind his well-fitting goggles. In the *foyer* I ran across Mr. "Binky" Boodle. Mr. Boodle, was, of course, part author of one of the lyrics in *Buzz*—— I forget the rest of the title. }

Went on to hear some joyous music at Lady Rowena Schreckenheim's, who has recently taken Lady Rebecca Levy's exquisite house in Grosvenor Mews. I simply adore the Lithuanian folk-songs of Madame Szchwnowykzosha, whose name is on everybody's lips these days.

Yesterday afternoon I came across the recently widowed Countess of Barcelona taking a quiet cup of tea all by herself. I hear she feels her loss very deeply, and I write this little paragraph in the hope that it may cheer her up.

Bim, of Regent Street, Nos. 1-117, tells me of a 'cute little idea for *robes de nuit* carried out in pale

White Horse and Red Lion

pastel and egg-shell blue, powdered with wurzel-flummeries. Too perfectly d'licious, seems to me. A light wrap of umber-coloured duvetyne may, she adds, be worn round the shoulders whilst switching off the electric light.¹

And then my pen became uneasy. Are these people, it spluttered, really of as much importance as your paragraphist makes out? Would the world be very much poorer if fire from heaven were to descend upon the lawn at Ascot and the boxes at Covent Garden? Why, it argued, should it have nothing to say about the people who carry on the world's work? And of itself it wrote the following:—

PENSCRATCHES

BY RELIEF

I hear that old Jane Coffin, who used to occupy the corner by the window in the fifth-floor back at No. 14 Tenement Row, has died suddenly. As there is only one other family in the room, it is thought that two business gentlemen might like to share. The accommodation will not be at liberty, of course, until after the funeral.

The river at Hampton Court was quite uncomfortably crowded on Sunday last, the occasion being

¹ It may interest the reader to note that two of the above paragraphs were copied verbatim, except for the names, from public prints. It is inconceivable that he should be able to guess which are the two paragraphs.

Hither and Dither

the Junior Assistants' Regatta. On the lawn in front of the Lee and Scuppers—which really puts up a very good meat tea—I noticed Mr. Esmé Tonsor in a *sac* of onion-green, pipe and brogues, in conversation with Mr. William Spry, who is, of course, Lord Chumver's third chauffeur. I thought Billy looked exceedingly alert in a dark blue Melton buttoning closely over well-creased tennis trousers, whilst his white yachting cap struck me as being singularly in place. A pair of brown lace-ups completed a delightful costume. Miss Manny Cure was at her most ethereal in apricot georgette, with panels of peach brocade and a hat of asparagus creeper and purple grapes. Linking with her was Miss Pennie Stamp in a flame-coloured *jersey-de-soie*, skirt of moonlight-blue, and green cloche. The sombreness of this attire was relieved by some artfully disposed aigrettes of ptarmigan's tail-feathers. These ladies' cavaliers were "Ankie" Strapp from Footgears, Ltd., and young Dillwater from Capsicum's. I caught a glimpse, too, of Queenie Pearl, who drove up behind the high-stepping moke awarded her at Olympia by Lord Lonsdale. She had, she told me, the liveliest recollection of his lordship's affability on that occasion. In mid-stream quite a crowd of celebrities: Mr. "Urnle" Glum, of Trappings & Woe, looking distinctly more cheerful than when he headed Lord Pykan's *cortège*, and that popular favourite, Mrs. Mydyffe. Astern of them *se trouvassent* Mr. Harris Tweedie, of Cutter's Row, and Mr. Hoodaf Thortit of "Inquiries,

White Horse and Red Lion

Ltd." The Underground and Bus Services were represented, whilst under the trees I noticed more than one pretty nursemaid with her gallant escort. The season is now in full swing, and everybody is looking forward to a smart heath on the first of August.

The invaluable Bliggs—Relief's ownest char-lady—is so busy these days that she has the family dinner sent in hot from "Itinerants." This firm has recently acquired a controlling interest in the Amalgamated Association of Chipmongers. Their menus are quite inexpensive and comparatively little trouble to prepare. Take yesterday's, for instance :—

Bloater.

Pommes de Terre Nellie Wallace.

Bread and Marg.

Liza of 953a, New Cut, S.E., is showing a wonderful *costume de nuit* in *calicot de coton*, secured at the waist with a *morceau* of *ficelle*. This material has the advantage of washing quite perfectly. The gown is to fall to the ankles, from which the feet of the wearer peep in and out like the little mice in Sir Roger de Coverley's poem. A tippet of shredded cocoanut matting may be usefully worn whilst blowing out the dip.

Hither and Dither

Habitué of the Heel and Toe Dance Club—that delightful resort of the *jeunesse dorée* at the Elephant—will have often admired the *abandon* of Mr. Jerry Noggin's dancing. Mr. Noggin is, in private life, a barman at the Crown and Anchor. He has also been operated upon for appendicitis.

With this my pen gave too loud a scratch and I woke up. The old beech had begun to nod, the ghost of an evening breeze stirring his tops. But the other ghosts were gone, wafted back to that world of cardboard in which alone they take on flesh and blood. It was half-past eight. In the theatres the curtain was going up. The revels were over, the play was about to begin.

Those Puppets

Those Puppets

LAST spring a company of Italian puppets made its appearance in London ; and at once the dramatic critics lost their heads. Let me repeat here something which I wrote immediately after the performance, in which I tried to set down not what should or could or might be felt about these dolls, but what I actually did feel. To charge one's colleagues with insincerity is not generally done ; let me admit that their ecstasies were simulated in what they felt to be a good cause. Yet there again they were wrong. The cause of the puppet is not a cause at all: it is a craze. And none the less a craze because it has turned some distinguished heads.

“ When in difficulty, go back to first principles ” should be a maxim for all dramatic critics. But since scarcely one of my colleagues has found difficulty in placing this inanimate company from the Teatro dei Piccoli, Rome, above the heads of Duse, Garrick, Roscius, or any flesh-and-blood actor soever, let me amend my apothegm to “ When faced by a new thing. . . . ” For the puppets are new to us, however old they may be to the Italians. Faced with what is to me a theatrical innovation, I go back to Pater's old warning against regarding the sensuous element in art as a matter of indifference. “ It is a mistake to regard the various products of art as but translations into

White Horse and Red Lion

different languages of one and the same fixed quantity of imaginative thought supplemented by certain technical qualities. . . ." And Pater lays it down that the sensuous material of each art brings with it a special phase or quality of beauty untranslatable into the forms of any other.

The sensuous material of the theatre, as I know it, is the body of the actor in terms of pose, gesture, play of voice and feature ; that of the marionette is—well, frankly, I do not know what it is. Instead of laying bare the essential virtue of the puppet, the critics have spent their rhapsodies to prove that wood or cardboard or papier mâché has the same quality of emotion as flesh and blood, only more so. Never has live actor so stirred them to laughter and tears ; never has tight-rope dancer, risking his neck, brought heart to mouth so leapingly as did the stuffed image of Bil-Bal-Bul. To read these panegyrists, all actors, now resting, may fold their hands for ever ; the active must shut up shop. I confess that all this sounds to me insincere, stupid and mischievous. Worse, it is " ninety-ish." It is reminiscent of Mr. Gordon Craig at his silliest, of Mr. Arthur Symons at his most perverse. One critic was so moved that he lifted whole the latter's " As he is painted, so will he smile ; as the wires lift or lower his hands, so will his gestures be ; and he will dance when his legs are set in motion " without the by-your-leave of quotation marks. Of course the puppet will obey the hand of its manipulator, in the same way that a football will obey the toe of its propeller ; the point is what

192

Those Puppets

does that obedience amount to? Will the puppet's strict nonentity afford that help to the author which the "intrusive little personality" of the actor is alleged to deny? "Little" was the wrong word; it is the overwhelming preponderance of the live actor which offends the extollers of marionettes. These have no desire to see a play "acted," or even to interpret an author; they would supersede dramatist's and actor's gross copying of life by a "new creative art" which, to put the matter in a nut-shell, shall not provoke the sailor in the gallery to leap upon the stage in rescue of the heroine, but shall adjure him to note how exquisitely the producer has thought in terms of scenery, lighting, costume, a formalised accent and gesture. Tackle the disciples of this new creative art and they will squirm, and squiggle some sort of denial. But the writings of their masters are there to confound them.

Appreciation of the puppets must be in terms of delicate, toy-like scenery, music the texture of which will not support human passion, and anything except what we normally call illusion. Whatever the essential virtue of these little people, it is not that they copy life, though it may be that they criticise it, and incidentally make a mock at the copyists. It was the mockery of which I was most conscious the other afternoon. Those delicious simagres and contortions of the Singing Princess conveyed no illusion of a princess singing, but they did enable me to realise the immensity of the concessions in rationality demanded by a *prima*

White Horse and Red Lion

donna. The king in his long night-gown, tinsel crown and obviously false beard was never about to suffer emotion in his own person or to arouse any in mine, but he did, amusingly, suggest actors who have done both. Bend him forward upon a stick, and I might have thought upon some player whose picture of age has stirred me ; change his crown for a silk hat, and I could have recalled how ill-bred Armand's father had seemed when he did not uncover in Marguerite's drawing-room. But that is not to believe that this lay-figure could ever *be* Adam, or old Duval. The Cardinal was such as an actor in Rossini's operas would have shown him; there was a hunter signed Munnings; a minor character had that admirable woodenness which your French comedian assumes so well. What an admirable head! one said aloud. It was when the dolls moved realistically that I was least illuded, capturing the most of that quality when they flouted verisimilitude. By a great effort it was possible to rid the mind of the idea of illusion altogether, and to glimpse the puppet as puppet and not as actor. And here again it was difficult not to go to one of the other arts. The grotesques startled you into some ironic, twisted perception of life as do the caricatures of Gavarni; the three droll mourners flinging their grief with bravura, non-human gesture to the flies, looked like galvanised projections of sorrow anteriorly arrested and flung on to canvas by, say, Mr. Augustus John ; the young gentleman in pink was like an illustration from *Monsieur* ; his mistress, in her

Those Puppets

riding-habit, stepped out of *The Lady*. This is still to describe one art in terms of another. Perhaps it is not so much that puppetry is elusive as that we have not yet learned the right manner of vision. I am certain that the wrong manner is to try to find actors, impersonators, illusionists. This is not what M. Anatole France meant when he said : "The marionette is august ; it issues from a sanctuary." We know the player not to be, in himself, august, that he issues from a green-room. M. France has told us of some puppets of M. Signoret which, in a representation of *The Tempest*, attained a quality like that of Egyptian hieroglyphics, so mysterious and pure that he could imagine the thoughts of the poet being unrolled in sacred characters upon the walls of the temple. Miranda had "the subtle grace of a figure of the early Italian Renaissance and the virginal fragrance of that fortunate fifteenth century which made beauty bloom a second time in the world." But had not Ellen Terry subtle grace and virginal fragrance, and did she not make beauty bloom yet a third time in the world ? No man is the keeper of another's artistic conscience, and I cannot tell what figures of wood move M. France. But if he declare that for me a doll can outvie Ellen Terry's girlhood, or that a carved and graven image give the same ecstasy as, three years ago, Mr. Francis Lister's Ferdinand evoked—why, then, I simply don't believe him. Neither do I quite believe my brother-critics. I began by upbraiding them on the score of wrong principles ; I should

White Horse and Red Lion

have charged them rather with softness of heart, and a desire to show politeness to our distinguished visitors even at the cost of praising them for the wrong thing. Until we have got the puppet-sense, comparison with the live actor is inevitable ; and I know no mimes, however bad, whom I would not prefer above these ingenious counterfeits. A parallel with the child's toy-theatre is obvious and has been freely made. The inference, however, has not been drawn. Let those who remember their childhood recall how exciting it was to dangle the figures and mouth the lines, how devastatingly boring to sit in front with the elders, silent and inactive.

When Summer Comes

When Summer Comes

Nobody is perfect, or has perfect sympathies. As I sit at my desk on this exquisite morning, all London is going a pilgrimage. The goal is Wembley Park ; creation moves to the final of the English Cup. "To all but the smallest handful of our fellow-citizens," declares one leader-writer, "the Cup Final means more than almost any other occurrence of the year." To me it means less than nothing. Yet my sympathies are not narrow, and crowds please me. I love the fair at Barnet, the beach at Margate, the train journey to and from—particularly from—Southend on a fine Whit Monday, the Downs on Derby Day, the Heath in August. I love basements on Bargain Days, the cheap seats at the Blackfriars Ring, the Oval's tilting, precarious shelves. I look forward to the opening of the Flat Racing season as eagerly as any pickpocket. Yet I do not stomach easily the crowd at an association football match, whereby I risk no offence to my readers, for the worshippers of "soccer" do not read. Neither do they write, except when, a-sprawl on the kitchen-table and tongue following each stroke of the pen, they contrive some clumsy hieroglyph indicative of a favoured team or prophetic goal-score. Between coupons the art of writing remains unpractised. Man at a "soccer" match delights me not ; nor woman neither.

White Horse and Red Lion

With the sun streaming through the window, I feel that I must write of crowds and the open air; if not of football mobs, then of some other. I would not treat to-day of the recluse in his library. On my table lies a new volume by one of our most brilliant young essayists, treating of Bibliophily, the Subject Matter of Poetry, and so on—fungus I deem these things when the sun is out. I shall postpone delight in Mr. Huxley's book till winter be here again: his themes are the Subject Matter of Fog, Drizzle and the Warm Fireside. To-day, with summer coming, I cannot be impassioned about "littery" gents and things.

Whenever Sainte-Beuve or Hugo or Théodore de Banville or any of those foreign scribblers ran short of material, it was his custom to go for a tour round the walls of his library. No bookish Frenchman was ever irked by the promise of summer. Yet every year, so surely as May comes, my judiciously-filled shelves cease to interest me; the best literature then seems second-rate. Even in Shakespeare I am conscious of what is coming, whereas when I mount the steps of a shining omnibus there is no knowing what adventure I may meet.

Of pictures, too, I have had enough at this season; they also present life too remotely. That modern artist's view of Richmond, Yorks., which I bought under suasion, still, when I retreat to the farthest corner of my room, seems a pretty "arrangement" in old-gold and rose-pink. *But I was once in camp on the spot where the artist pitched his easel.*

When Summer Comes

What is his vision, what can his paltry vision be, compared with my recollection of golden months, of an old English castle flushed with dawn and rising English hope? Or take that picture of an old woman which so enchanted me throughout November and December. She faces me, with something which I take to be hands folded in her lap, something which might be wool or lace wrapped round her shoulders. She has but one eye, yet the loss cannot have been occasioned during a drunken brawl; the room in which my old lady sits is too obviously her own drawing-room in Notting Hill Gate. She does not get drunk. Behind her appear the forehead and one hand of a blotted, indeterminate being seated at a piano. Though in to-day's sunlight the composition revoltingly proclaims its degraded khaki and burnt porridge, yet I remember that in the fogs of autumn I saw "feeling" in the piano legs. Or was persuaded that I did. One picture which, a few weeks ago, I acquired on my own responsibility, delights me still. It is a panel on wood. The artist, when I bought it, was reclining against the railings; a cap, sparsely filled with coppers, lay on the flags by his side.

"Give you a bob for the masterpiece," I said, pointing to a horror which had obviously been the artist's portrait of a Kensington Square housemaid, but was in drawing, colour, mood, and atmosphere exactly like a modern concept of the Virgin.

"The wood's worth more, guv'nor," he replied.

White Horse and Red Lion

"There's another pictur' on the back. Make it two bob!"

There *was* another picture. It was a chalk drawing of a rogue-elephant (green) brandishing in his trunk a hunter (salmon-pink) and crashing with him to his lair in the undergrowth (bright yellow). Lizzie, on the other side, was in a more subjugated key, that of bilge-water seen by the light of the fo'c's'l lamp. I took Lizzie home and had her nonchalantly framed. I "gave out" to my Chelsea friends that I had picked up a Tirelajambe, an early but undoubtedly genuine work of that much-discussed master. I spoke of my find in hushed tones, and hinted at a party and an unveiling. Expending half a crown upon the current number of *Palette and Chisel*, I concocted a criticism in the style of Mr. Esmé Tulip, and persuaded a compositor of my acquaintance to set it up in the familiar type of that eminent art-critic's journal. Here it is:—

"Marcel Tirelajambe conveys plasticity, not by the laborious modelling of a Raphael or the sculpturesque 'bosses' of a Michelangelo, but by the juxtaposition of flat masses of colour, so nicely balanced and so perfectly related as to compel the sensation of recession. In the ideated picture space, the planes circulate freely and rhythmically. A system of linear curves, imposed on these massive and dignified forms, gives to this work a *delicatesse* reminiscent of the earlier altar pieces of Esel von München,

When Summer Comes

although the German primitive lacks the dynamic stresses which, in Tirelajambe, compel the unorganised forms of nature into a significant arrangement in three dimensions. In the Virgin Esel saw nothing more than the virgin; Tirelajambe, adjusting her to a modern, purely visual concept of 'virginity,' has created significant form. Here is no sentiment. Tirelajambe has bravely omitted the traditional Infant. Nature is reduced to essentials, tones are muted, economy and force characterise what is perhaps one of the most perfect interrelations of accurately-felt planes, since Gnocci da Ravioli painted his now obliterated frescoes in Santa Maria dal Vino. Here, surely, the superb art of the South Eastern Kan-kan negroes of the pre-Jubjub period finds its consummation."

Next I bought an easel, placed the picture on it, pinned the printed slip to the cheap wooden frame, and covered the whole with a cloth of ruby velvet. I invited all Chelsea to my party, and at it achieved that which Mr. Louis Golding claims to have accomplished in his story of Bolgoni. In three words I spoofed the lot! The following week half the art-dealers in London sought my doors, but I had not the heart to let Lizzie go.

To-day my mind is closed to art-mongers and art-critics. Hear them discuss my pretty water-colour drawing by Walter Crane. In the foreground two cart-horses—though I admit their legs are a trifle spindly—plod wearily homeward. On the

White Horse and Red Lion

back of the foremost sits a ploughboy, exchanging courtesies with a maid who has just finished milking. She carries her pail on her head, and I imagine her to have the character of Marian in Mr. Hardy's *Tess*. On the left of the picture are rising ground, barns, haycocks, geese. In the centre, and in middle-distance, is a copse of trees surrounded by a stone wall in which is a white gate. Between the copse and the barns the road rises, hangs a moment, and disappears over the brow of the hill. In the background, right, is the hillside down which trees, like Italian cavalry, descend an escarpment. In the foreground, right, on a falling slope, two sheep and some bracken. It is evening. All that my high-brow friends can tell me is that the drawing is wooden, the colouring weak, and that the composition slips away to the right and wants holding up.

"How the devil could the artist hold it up when there was nothing there to hold it up with?" I ask.

All the sense that I can make of their complicated jargon is that the artist should have shifted his point of view. To which my answer is that if he had shifted it he must have lost that exquisite bit where you can almost see over the brow. To this they make some stupid, adequate reply.

A dealer has told me that. . . . But let me reproduce his letter:—

"DEER SIR,—the picture by crane is no use, it is a water-colour and has had the mildew and

When Summer Comes

is of very little value, had it been oil-colour it may have reached £40 as the Americans are buying this artist work at present, it is Plugoughts farm North Armitville Long Island U.S.A., I have a very good horse picture Highflier 1873 by unknown painter was offered for yesterday at £20 but seeing as I showed it you last week at £10 will now exchange for the crane and take £10 but this offer is open to no one else.

“ Yours respectfully,

“ J. FRAME.”

The fellow lies. The view is that bit of the high road from Chapel-en-le-Frith to Buxton, England, just as you are about to dip down to Fairfield Common. How many scores, nay hundreds, of times have not I and an exquisite little mare—but principally the mare—toiled up that long slope! Beyond the barns is the eleventh tee—I think it is the eleventh—where the golfers wave, and shout that they are going to drive over you to the green in the hollow. And you rein in your horse and watch them fizzle. Vivianette—sire Lord Hamlet by Lord Derby II., dam Vivienne by Sir Horace by Little Wonder II. by Lord Derby II.—a trapper, was the best animal that I ever owned. A bright bay, 14-3 h.h., she had in overwhelming measure that supreme quality of man and horse—pluck. Scarcely could she bear to pause for the golfers, so anxious was she to wake that country town, and rouse an echo in its sleepy walls. Give me space for some account of the little mare's history.

White Horse and Red Lion

At one of my earlier visits to Crewe, incensed at a bid of thirty-five guineas for an animal for which I had paid eighty some weeks previously, and still more at a bid lesser by five pounds from the dealers outside the ring who lie in wait for the disappointed, I plunged into the straw, vowing to buy the next animal put up. This partly out of pique, and partly on the principle that a bad day to sell is a good day to buy. A creature of unknown sex, age, height, and colour—I could only see the tip of her ears—was promptly knocked down to me. As I led my twenty-six guineas' worth to the station, I realised that on the morrow she would be dead lame. After six months I took her up from grass, and for five years my absurd purchase was a better friend to me than all the show horses in the world put together! She had nearly every fault of conformation and most unsoundnesses, but her temper, intelligence, and courage were better than most humans'. She would stand twelve hours gruelling among the Derbyshire hills and finish on her hind legs; she would do forty or fifty miles a day in tireless succession; she would strip her harness if I so much as clicked at her; and she would wait at village inns unattended for hours, finally, *à bout de patience*, tapping at the snugger window with her nose. She did not, like the modern show horse, need cocaine to give her courage and turpentine to free her shoulders and lift her hocks. Vivianette wore herself so grandly in leather that in the streets old horsemen would snatch at their hats, and children pause in their games to stare.

When Summer Comes

I have no patience with the fool calling that a bad picture which brings back Vivianette.

At the outbreak of the war I sold the little mare for seventy guineas to a neighbouring farmer who knew what she had cost, and that, though her pluck would not let her show it, she still was, and always had been, lame. Besides being a farmer, my friend was a poacher and gipsy of sorts, had in his youth done time for manslaughter, and at seventy was still a genial wit, an admirable shot, and a magnificent judge of a horse. Originally from the Isle of Wight, he had taken for safety to the Peak Country. "The island waur that low-lying, mester, I thow't it waur going to sink." Robert had a profound contempt for show horses, and on each of my visits he would say, "Show horses is muck, mester; how's t'ould mare?" But show horses are not muck. They are poems in rhythm, poise and balance; that they have not been sung is the fault of the poets who, to do their subject justice, would need a subtler technique than that of prosody. Nor ever could I get Robert to like the crowd at Olympia. He mistrusted its smartness, and in these democratic days we have no poet to tell him that a horsewoman's heart may beat beneath a well-fitting habit, and that a coronet is not necessarily a bar to good "hands." The crowd at Olympia is the crowd I love most. It is the crowd sung by Mr. Dennis Bradley, and steps out of the pages of our fashion-journals to take the promenade behind the boxes, or to loll, in exquisite pose, on those elegant, gilded chairs. But to Robert,

White Horse and Red Lion

Olympia is a show for the best people, and, as a remark of his indicates, these have not his regard. "Fashionable folk, mester?" he said to me on one occasion, "fashionable folk think nowt to a horse unless it has a bunch o' flowers stucken in its a——e!"

To be an artist may be to join the company of Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Velasquez, but from May to October I would rather keep company with a Hackney groom. For six months in the year the only pictures of interest on my walls are those of the little mare Talke Princess, dam of Axholme Venus, greatest of all harness ponies; of Rusper Maryan, my London winner; of the veteran First Edition who, I heard last season, was still winning prizes in the country and beating upstart novices in spite of his seventeen years. The only books on my shelves which I want to open to-day are the *Hackney Stud Book*, my bound copies of *The Live Stock Journal*, and the volumes of Vinton's *Show Record* for the years when I was showing. Life for me holds nothing comparable to the thrills of the ring, nor may bank of wild thyme exceed in ecstasy the odour of turf new-turned by horses' hoofs. All over England now grooms are expending loving stores of spit and polish upon browband, curb, and coat. The French are sending innumerable tons of chalk to add a last lustre to our horses' fetlocks. The makers of wedding-favours are sitting up till dawn over red and blue rosettes. Scene-shifters are turning the big vault of Olympia into a credible imitation of the Escorial, or of

208

When Summer Comes

Lowther Castle. Now Cuban argosies bound for Lord Lonsdale's smoking apartments are entering the river, and Sir Gilbert Greenall is having those so exquisite cossacks—Savile Row's fondest euphemism—strapped anew. Oh, to be in England now the Horse Show's near!

Take it from me that when summer comes, all the art critics, all the musical critics, and even those exquisite fellows the dramatic critics, are not worth one single groom, ball-boy, golf caddie, or cricket-pro. who sends you up one to hit. For the next six months I would rather be bowled for a duck than write the noblest sonnet of Shakespeare. A hundred times would I rather make a century against Mudcombe, or struggle round Slushwater in 69, or carry off a "highly commended" at Olympia, than write all the plays, including *Titus Andronicus*. It may well be that when November comes round again and I have been knocked out in the first round of every lawn-tennis tournament, compiled a batting average of 3·8, seen my handicap increased to 24, and my pony despised of the judges—it may well be that I shall dismiss racket, bat, club, and whip as pitiful toys, and return with pleasure to my rose-pink castle and my gamboge Old Woman. And, above all, I know that I shall return, overjoyed, to faithful Lizzie. But that time is far off. Art is long, and summer fleeting. Enough of this, therefore; I must look to my flannels, go round to the little shop where they sell Blanco, and try on my pony's new shoes.

An Unruffled Olympian

An Unruffled Olympian

MR. A. B. WALKLEY, whose latest *Prejudices* lie before me, is the co-doyen—if I may coin the word—of dramatic criticism. The twin-Nestor of this lively art is, of course, Mr. William Archer, whose rousing drama, *The Green Goddess*, created such a furore when it was produced at the St. James's Theatre.

Mr. Walkley has never, I believe, written a play; and even were he to make confession of such lapse I should not go beyond polite incredulity. It consorts with all that this most fastidious of writers has penned that he should have remained aloof from contact with the stage. Such prose as his is not achieved to be cut about by evilly-inspired "producers," or mouthed by actors inspired neither to good nor evil. Authors there are who use their quill to dig for ideas as a gardener grubs for potatoes. But no vulgar simile will do for this most elegant and suave of craftsmen.

Mr. Walkley's writing always reminds me of a juggling feat by Cinquevalli; his style is a shaft supple as a billiard-cue, atop of which we perceive in perfect equipoise those polished ivories, the word and the idea. "*Voilà!*" he seems to cry at the end of each perfect paragraph, and we applaud as at a trick well done.

I am constrained to give an example of this perfect literary manner. Our author is writing

White Horse and Red Lion

of Jane Austen's contempt for the aristocracy, and, with perfect felicity, calls his essay *Jane's Prejudice*. He has been immensely tickled by the passage in which Lord Osborne expatiates on the merits of half-boots. The scene is an afternoon visit after a ball. Lord Osborne hopes that Emma has not caught cold, and relapses into silence. After much hard labour of mind he recommends half-boots for walking in dirty weather, and expresses the opinion that ladies should ride whether they can afford it or not. There is some discussion of this, followed by a second relapse. Rising to take his leave, his lordship "recommended exercise in defiance of dirt; spoke again in praise of half-boots; begged that his sister might be allowed to send Emma the name of her shoemaker."

Mark, now, how Mr. Walkley does this:—

There is only one peer in her novels, Lord Osborne, in the unfinished tale, *The Watsons*, and he is an empty ass. "Spoke again in praise of half-boots" settled *him*.

This is the perfect courtesy of letters—the assumption that the reader is as profoundly and as elegantly read as his mentor. The little sentence at the end is as malicious a stab as Jane herself could have delivered.

If there be a weakness in Mr. Walkley it is to be found in his urbanity. He is essentially not only of the town, but also of the Capital, and of certain select and restricted areas of that

An Unruffled Olympian

Capital. The late Dixon Scott once imagined the great critic confronted by Mr. Arnold Bennett's *Five Towns*, and asking wearily: "Where are they?" I doubt whether Mr. Walkley could point on the map to Manchester. Set him down in Piccadilly Circus, and I am certain that he would be unable to find his way to, say Victoria or Notting Hill. He does not know, for example, that the number 19 bus goes to Islington. Mark the delicacy with which the denial is imparted:—

M. Morand has wandered over London from Ebury Street to the confines of Epping Forest, from Upper Tooting to the route of Motor-bus No. 19, which (he asserts) takes you to Islington.

But this perverse and wilful ignorance of "haunts which I have never had the temerity to approach" recoils in the end upon one for whom nine-tenths of humanity do not exist. For nine-tenths of humanity this writer does not exist. If Mr. Walkley knows not Islington, be sure that Islington knows not Mr. Walkley. His state may be the more gracious, but there are moments when one is tempted to reflect that this is a maxim which cuts both ways. Exquisite dabbler among the *agréments*, the amenities and embroideries of life, this philosopher has never shown in his art the least passion or even concern for life itself.

Mr. Walkley is extraordinarily deft and acute in his comparison between Balzac's eternal duchesses and Marcel Proust's great ladies. But I do not

White Horse and Red Lion

feel sure that he could differentiate between Tom Robertson's Sam Gerridge and a young plumber as presented by Mr. Galsworthy. All that this critic knows, or gives me to understand that he knows, about the "lower" classes is that they are, not to put too fine a point upon it, low. Does he not, in this present volume, openly sing the praises of a "furtive, discreet, more or less harmless kind of snobbery?"

Love of adventure, except between the covers of a book, was never our essayist's forte. He is one of life's tasters, not participators. Life with its rough-and-tumble is to him bad form. I cannot imagine this exquisite looking upon war, pestilence, famine, cataclysm, in any other light save that of an interruption of the amenities; the great lady who, on hearing of Germany's declaration of war, said that she "always knew that William was vulgar," can have had no more faithful echo than Mr. Walkley.

I know of no writer who has so much "sensitivity" and so little real feeling. I have never been able to detect emotion in his brilliant writing round, and occasionally about, the theatre. No critic has ever been less taken in when he ought not to have been, or, for that matter, when it was desirable that he should have been. Mr. Walkley saw right through Pinero, and had emptied the bran out of him, long before his colleagues began to hail him as a great man. But we all have the defects of our qualities; that of Mr. Walkley is that he deems the whole of the modern theatre to

An Unruffled Olympian

be sawdust-crammed. "There is scarcely a breath of poetry, or spirituality, in the modern theatre. There is no dignity, ethical or artistic. What does abound in it is mediocrity—mediocrity of mind, of ideal, of taste. Why, then, be solemn about it?"

The answer is because earnestness, if not solemnity, is needed to-day more than ever. The theatre cries out for vigorous denunciation and a blow for the good, on those rare occasions when we find it. Mr. Walkley is content to have no hand in the great effort to dam the stupid flood; he prefers to float comfortably on its bosom and mutter witticisms in his beard, careless whether or not they are overheard by the people on the banks.

Two remarkable playwrights have appeared within the last year or so—the American Eugene O'Neill and the English C. K. Munro. Do their names appear in these essays? No, but eight are devoted wholly or in part to one Marcel Proust, a novelist of whom not one Englishman in a hundred thousand has heard. Is there a word in these pages concerning the "Old Vic," and the tremendous enthusiasm with which the Waterloo Road turns itself into that house? No, for the simple reason that Mr. Walkley has never heard of the Waterloo Road.

Is there any allusion, save a purely scornful one, to the cinema, which is the only theatre which millions of people know, or care to know? There is not. Because, to give the cinema a push in the right direction, this Olympian would have to descend into the arena and do vulgar battle, and

White Horse and Red Lion

perhaps get a little dusty in the process. And getting dusty is very distasteful to Olympians.

The truth is that Mr. Walkley's mind became "set" round about the 'nineties, and that he in no sense belongs to the post-war generation. He deplores that Anatole France, Jules Lemaître, Matthew Arnold, and the critics of his youth, are to-day looked upon as fossils. He dubs himself an old fogey, and frankly avows that his tastes are not of to-day.

Let me leave him, then, surrounded by his pet authors—Aristotle, Jane, Madame de Sévigné, Sainte-Beuve, Brunetière, Croce. The French speak with bated breath of the *Mondays* of Sainte-Beuve. Were we French we should speak reverently of the *Wednesdays* of Mr. Walkley.

Let not his limitations be too strongly insisted upon; it were but dull criticism to complain of a polished and consummate marble that it is not a block of rough stone new-hewn for fresh service. Mr. Walkley has his niche in the temple of letters.

An Old-Fashioned Novel

An Old-Fashioned Novel

Books are the privilege of the unlettered. To write them is to take away their pleasure. Whenever, in these later years, I take up an author who does not know how to manage his sentences, I must lay the book down however good the story; a skilful writer moves me to envy. Were I not a bungling apprentice in the same trade as the master-craftsmen my reading would give me ten times greater pleasure. In the same way I imagine that amateur to find greatest joy in supreme music who has the least number of those inept "Album Leaves" to his discredit.

But there was a time when a book was a book, no more and no less. One's heart sank not before a style more exquisite than one's own; nor did one frown upon its lapses. The thing was *print*, and that was good enough. Also it told a story, for in one's nonage a book was, *ipso facto*, a novel. It is only in middle life that one realises that the facts about Edwin's passion for Angelina matter nothing, that the essay, or reflective vein is all. Be assured, young man holding me in your hand, that if this mood be not upon you now, yet it will come, and you must be ready for it. A young coxcomb of my acquaintance has assured me that he would not, if he could, write like Charles Lamb. Done perfectly, the essay is not worth doing, he declares. He is all for *Madame Bovary*

White Horse and Red Lion

or nothing; but as yet I do not tremble for Flaubert.

The other day I chanced upon a book of the sort which was once my boyish delight. I found it in the twopenny box of a second-hand bookseller. It was called *The Country Gentleman*. The book had no covers, and no name of author or publisher. I hazard from internal evidence that it must have been written about the middle of the last century, the page at which I opened it affording sufficient indication that it belonged to an age before our upstarts had bemeaned letters by writing about common folk. My glance fell directly upon the following:—

“The marchioness has no voice in the matter,” the earl replied; “and his being Lord Dunkerton’s most intimate friend is no recommendation to me. Once more, Lady Agnes, I repeat that this Irish baronet shall never, with my consent, become your husband; and I insist upon your never holding any further communication with him.”

How’s that for high? My twopence was instantly forthcoming, and hugging the prize to my breast, I ran all the way home, stopping only at the chandler’s shop. For sentiment’s sake I keep, but seldom use, an old lamp which belonged to my great-grandfather, and this was obviously an occasion calling for its rare and venerable aid. Having purchased a sufficient quantity of oil and wick to see me through some four hundred tall, closely printed pages, I prepared to spend the

222

An Old-Fashioned Novel

remainder of a dull November day cheered by the lamp's friendly light and this novel of long ago. I was not disappointed; nay, I was entranced, and could hardly bear the interval demanded by my meagre supper. I want the reader, in that which follows, to consider me not at all. I shall be there to turn over the pages of this wonderful book for him—that is all. Nothing that I can say can add to its naïve eloquence. My quotations shall be long and exhaustive, so determined am I that this old writer shall live again in his own person. You shall see that there was never better marriage of matter and style.

The opening paragraphs plunge us into mid-Trollope. Yes, 1860 is unquestionably the date.

It was a calm, serene day in the first week of August, some thirty years ago, when, seated in a large garden chair in the pleasure grounds of Woodborough Park, two beautiful girls were enjoying the delightful shade of a fine old cedar, by whose thick and wide-spreading branches the scorching rays of the meridian sun were excluded. It was noon; not a leaf of shrub or tree, by which this sylvan retreat was surrounded, fluttered; not a breeze stirred sufficient to agitate the stately poplars, which raised their tall, spiral heads from the margin of a small lake lying at a short distance beyond the garden, and on whose smooth, silvery surface not a zephyr played with its silken wing—not even a fish rose to cause a momentary circling ripple on the glassy bosom of its glittering waters. Above, around, beneath them all Nature seemed lulled to sleep, save that at intervals the hoarse cooing of the Cushat dove, echoing through the beech grove above the lake, broke in upon the stillness which reigned around. Before these two fair daughters of Eve, who, of nearly the same age, had scarcely reached their seventeenth

White Horse and Red Lion

birthday, lay reclining on the nicely-kept lawn, supporting himself carelessly on one arm, his handsome face turned towards them, the form of a youth, who had just attained his twenty-first year.

"Well, Edmund," said Agnes Gerard, "so you are come home for the holidays at last; we thought you did not intend to honour us at all with your presence this autumn."

"Vacation, you ought to have said, Agnes; that is the correct term, as used by Oxford men; I am no longer a boy," with a contemptuous cast of his upper lip.

Agnes, daughter of the Earl of Woodborough, whose countess died some fifteen years before the story opens, is most properly provided with a *gouvernante*, whose picture I now present.

Although one of that neglected, ill-paid class, a governess, Mrs. Errington was a person of superior intellect, and extremely lady-like; and being the daughter of a clergyman of old family, she had always mixed in good society. The earl had exercised great discretion in selecting such a person to fill that most important situation, all-important to the future welfare of his only child; and being satisfied, after a twelvemonth's probation, with Mrs. Errington's many excellent qualities, she was considered and treated on all occasions as one of the family. She was not mewed up and confined in the school-room, like a nun in a convent, as too many unfortunate governesses are, without the opportunity of speaking to another human being, save the children under their care, or the nursery-maid. The earl possessed too much good sense and feeling not to perceive that it was necessary for his daughter's future welfare, if not with any regard for her own comfort, that Mrs. Errington should still continue to mix in the best society—to observe continually the manners and courtesies of high life, to enable her to impart what was desirable to her youthful pupil. And it must be confessed the governess well deserved the earl's confidence, since,

An Old-Fashioned Novel

irrespective of her religious and moral character, she was a person who would not pass unobserved, even among the most distinguished of England's aristocratic matrons and daughters.

Let me now present the hero.

Of Edmund Knightley, we may briefly relate that he was the second son of an old English squire of that name, living at Wychwood Court, in the same neighbourhood, and godson of the earl, who had taken such a fancy to the boy, that he felt more happy at Woodborough than in his father's house, where his elder brother exercised a galling dominion over him, on account of Edmund having been left a fine place and good landed property by an uncle (on the mother's side), Mr. Pemberton who, dying without children, made Edmund his heir.

Edmund is suitor for the hand of the earl's daughter; although one guesses as early as page two that it is not haughty Agnes but her retiring friend Edith—both ladies, you remember, were listening in the opening paragraph to the hoarse cooing of the Cushat dove—whom he will ultimately marry. And now for a description of Woodborough which, incidentally, will tell the reader all he wants to know about his author.

The house itself was a handsome edifice, sufficiently spacious for a gentleman of large property. There were two entrance halls, one on the western side, the carriage approach, and the other or inner hall (containing a fine oak staircase leading to the principal bedrooms), the door of which opened to the lawn and flower-garden. On the ground floor were the usual apartments; saloon, drawing, and dining-rooms, of large and lofty dimensions, with a

White Horse and Red Lion

fine library of books. The site had been chosen with great taste, being protected on the north side by a finely timbered hill, and surrounded by the most beautiful scenery, diversified with woodlands and water—three large lakes lying in succession down the valley, by the side of which the lower drive extended nearly two miles, before reaching the lodge gates. These fine pieces of water, covered with swans and wild fowl, abounded also in fish, and being visible from the lawn and drawing-room windows, particularly attracted the attention of visitors, with the old abbey ruins, some half-mile distant, the large oriel window still standing, forming a vista through which the eye was directed to the distant heath-clad hills. Below the house, and on both sides of the lakes, lay the large deer park, studded with magnificent oak and elm trees, beneath which, clustered in irregular groups, and adding greatly to the natural picturesque beauty of the scenery, reposed the deer, flapping their ears, and tossing their still soft velvety antlers to keep off the flies during the heat of a summer's day.

No public roads or pathways passed by, or within a mile of this secluded retreat, which, embosomed amongst the hills, lay in almost silent though majestic repose—like the Happy Valley—undisturbed by the rattling of public vehicles or the noisy clamour of men. Not even the ploughboy's whistle could be heard, no arable land being visible in this lower domain, the stillness which breathed around was, however, broken in the early spring months by the hoarse voices of a large colony of rooks, and the woods resounded with the shrill notes of the blackbird and thrush. A rookery is generally considered as almost a necessary appendage to an old English family place; and it was once remarked by a country squire, the view from whose house had been obstructed by a new, gaudy-looking structure, built by a rich parvenu who had lately purchased a few acres of land for this purpose—"Thank God, these fellows cannot build trees!" It is the misfortune, however, that they can *buy* if they cannot build fine trees. Well would it be for this country, did the old Jewish law prevail here, which prevented landed property being alienated from its rightful possessor for a period

An Old-Fashioned Novel

exceeding fifty years, or beyond the year of jubilee, when it was obliged to be restored to him or his family. Under our one-sided jurisdiction, and that miscalled court of equity, aided and assisted by a set of voracious harpies—the just reward of whose nefarious acts and deeds would be a gallows as high as Haman’s—country gentlemen are robbed and plundered of their old family estates, and consigned almost to beggary ; and the money-made man, with his ill-gotten pelf, stalks through the halls of many an old ancestral home, where even the pictures from the walls seem to bid defiance to his insolent intrusion.

And now a wicked captain appears upon the scene.

Captain Duncombe was a gay, dashing young officer, very good-looking and agreeable, now in his twenty-fifth year, but reported as going much too fast for his means, and, from his expensive habits, occasioning great anxiety to his mother, who had two other sons and two daughters to provide for. The earl, knowing his propensities and immoral course of life, suspecting, also, his intentions towards his daughter, and wholly disapproving his visits, was unable, however, to prevent them, although he was never invited to dine at Woodborough.

On the afternoon on which our tale opens, the four friends take a pleasure-trip on the lake, Lady Agnes and the captain occupying the stern of the fishing-boat, Edmund and Edith farther forward, Thomas pulling in the centre.

There was scarcely a ripple on the surface of the water across which they were propelled by the vigorous arms of the stalwart footman, who appeared too intent on his occupation to notice very particularly the attentions and soft sotto voce speeches of the captain to his young mistress.

White Horse and Red Lion

Thomas, however, did notice sometimes a little heightened colour on the cheeks of Lady Agnes, and it displeased him. Edmund, also, observing the same, sat almost silent by Edith.

Thomas becomes, in fact, so greatly incensed with the wicked captain that he upsets the boat. Edmund rescues Agnes. Thomas saves Edith, the captain bobs up and down screaming for help. Thereafter no menial in the book is allowed a humanity exceeding that of Capek's Robots; silent, they serve and clear away; and when they speak it is to announce the carriage. The reader is left in no doubt whatever as to the social surroundings. They are what, in 1860, were called "the very best."

Lawn-meets are the excuse for full-length portraits of the nobility, landed gentry, and *nouveaux riches* of the period. The newcomers are represented by the Shuttleworths, father and son.

Mr. Zacharia Alphonso Augustus John Shuttleworth, the hopeful heir of the Shuttleworth family, a pink-and-white faced young gentleman, in his twenty-second year, resembling his mamma in rather a Dutch-built style of figure, after being sent at an early age to Eton, then to Oxford, and lastly on the Continent to spend a year or two in travel with a private tutor, returned home, having been modelled into something like a gentleman as to external appearance and the cut of his coat; but for all this pummelling, lecturing, and tutoring, the commonest labourer would never mistake him for a gentleman. The quiet, easy deportment of true gentility was wanting, as well as its characteristics of mind, heart, and feeling.

An Old-Fashioned Novel

Alphonso's papa was a much better-looking man than his son, although not so finely polished ; possessing rather large though not coarsely vulgar features, and his eye betokening great activity of mind. He was a sharp, shrewd, intelligent man of business, and having practised some few years as a solicitor, he was up to all the quirks and quibbles of the law. Mr. Shuttleworth, having been employed solely by business men, that is, tradesmen, in Manchester, was thereby let into their secrets of rapid money-making by speculation ; and having made two or three ventures himself in that line, which proved successful beyond his expectations, he was induced to embark more largely in such enterprises, so that in a very short time—marvellously short to the uninitiated—he was reported the richest man on 'Change. There are facilities and accommodations afforded to men in business, by bankers and others on the bare security of their names only, which a gentleman of good landed property might apply for in vain, except through the usual ruinous process of lawyers, law, mortgage, etc. The most iniquitous transactions in this money-making age are almost daily exposed, and until the public safety is protected by some new parliamentary enactment, roguery will ride rampant and rough-shod through the land. Even the lowest Radical papers are compelled to cry out against the wholesale adulterations of every article sold for consumption, or the use of man.

Then there is old Mr. Knightley, Edmund's father.

Descended from a long line of ancestors, who had possessed Wychwood Court for many generations, Mr. Knightley was now in his fiftieth year, rather tall and thin, standing about five feet eleven, and possessing a fine intelligent cast of features, little impaired by the hand of Time ; in appearance and manners the personification of a highly bred and highly polished English gentleman. Being endowed with great natural abilities, clever, and well-informed on general subjects, well versed in literature and the laws of his country, he had been

White Horse and Red Lion

selected to fill the office of chairman at the quarter-sessions ; discharging his duties to the satisfaction of his brother magistrates, with equal courtesy and discretion. He held, in addition, another very responsible and arduous post—that of master of the fox-hounds, which had been kept in his family for more than a century.

Of the Marquis of Dunkerton no description is given. A marquis is a marquis, and to attempt to describe one were, for our author, to risk seeming to criticise the handiwork of God. All that is vouchsafed is that he sits a hunter like a marquis. A detailed portrait is forthcoming of Sir Digby Colville, his crony.

Sir Digby, unlike Irishmen generally, had become a tolerably prudent man ; yet he was not strictly of Irish blood, his mother having been a Scotch woman. Three months of the year, during the height of the season, were spent by him in London, where, from his good connections, he had obtained an *entrée* into the first society ; and as a set-off against his extra expenditure at that time, he was compelled to economise for the remaining nine, either at his old place, or by visiting his friends. Being also a good judge of horses, he always picked up every autumn three or four well-bred, young, weight-carrying hunters, with which he set sail, about the end of October, for some friend's house in England, where he had only to provide provender for them and his groom, the cost of which the sale of one of his stud proved generally sufficient to cover ; buying at about thirty pounds, and sometimes selling for three hundred ; for one horse, which cost him only thirty-five pounds, having actually pocketed five hundred.

But our friend the captain does a bit of dealing too ; and on one occasion pockets a hundred and fifty guineas, “ the allowance made to him by his

230

An Old-Fashioned Novel

friend Dickens, the horse-dealer, for sticking three horses into the cotton-lord at a very stiff price." Duncombe must, one thinks, have been a half-hearted rogue that he did not play the whole game and charge Alphonso a buying commission of 150 guineas as well. Excellent is that little touch where the rascal buys a hack for thirty-five guineas and sells it for thirty to the father of the girl he wants to marry. Captain Duncombe obtains for young Shuttleworth an invitation to dine with the marquis. After dinner the trio and Sir Digby sit down to whist, Alphonso facing the captain, Colville the marquis.

The five-shilling points seemed rather high to our hero, who had never gone beyond one under the parental tree ; but, of course, a marquis would not play for such a trifling sum—he could not expect it in aristocratic circles ; and as his partner, the captain, swept off the winnings from the two first rubbers, Alphonso thought it good fun.

" You are in luck to-night, Duncombe," remarked the marquis ; " I can't afford to lose much more money."

" Oh ! never mind, my lord, luck will change over to your side now, for fortune is a very fickle dame. What say you to golden instead of silver points ?—it will save my carrying home all these small coins jingling in my pocket. I shall be accused of robbing the toll-keeper."

" As you please," replied the marquis, with a laugh ; " guinea points, if you like."

The third rubber fell to the captain, who, on collecting the sovereigns, said, " Ah ! these yellow boys are much prettier things to handle ; but whist-playing is dry, thirsty work ; will your lordship favour us with a tankard of mulled claret ? "

" Pull the bell, Duncombe," was the reply ; and on the

White Horse and Red Lion

butler entering, the tankard, brandy, and champagne were ordered to be placed on a side-table, near them.

The game continued ; and as the wine and spirits went down, other false spirits arose, which tempted Alphonso to exhibit his contempt for money by offering to treble the stakes when the luck had gone over to the other side. On squaring accounts, Alphonso and the captain were down on the debtor side to the amount of one hundred and fifty pounds each, so deep had they been playing. After they were gone, Sir Digby said, " That youngster bleeds freely, Dunkerton ; I suppose it's all right with this slip of paper he has given me ? How do you stand with the captain ? "

" Thus," replied the marquis, handing him Duncombe's cheque, on which was written—

" Messrs. KNOCKEMOFF & Co.,—Please pay the Marquis of Dunkerton one hundred and fifty bob.—
J. DUNCOMBE."

" Well, Dunkerton, in that case you must, of course, share my profits."

But our author does not tell us whether the captain played badly on purpose, and he is silent as to the marquis's delicacy, as he would put it, in this matter. But suppose Thomas had been detected stacking the cards during a quiet rubber in the pantry!

It is not my purpose to trace the sentimental course of events. But there are some enchanting conversations:—

" Alas ! " exclaimed Edmund, " I fear my worst anticipations are realised—that Agnes has accepted that unprincipled man."

" I fear so, too," was Edith's reply.

An Old-Fashioned Novel

"But could not you, Edith, dissuade her from such folly?"

"No," she replied sadly; "my influence has been unavailing, for, knowing the earl's and your opinion of Sir Digby Colville, I have said all I could to induce her to refuse his attentions, and we had a serious disagreement on this subject, when she desired I should never mention his name to her again."

"Oh! what a fate will hers be," Edmund said, "if married to a spendthrift, gambler, and libertine! How infatuated women are with these heartless, plausible hypocrites, these men of the world, who talk of love and sentiment, unknown and unfelt by them, as pity by a tiger! And you, too, Edith, with your sound sense and deep feelings of religion, appear to be taken also with a character equally worldly as that needy Irishman."

Or this, on receiving a letter from Agnes, who had been abandoned and proclaimed dead by her husband, Sir Digby:—

"Oh, Edmund!" exclaimed Edith, "what can we do to save poor Agnes, if indeed she is still alive?"

"Do, my beloved? I must leave home this very day, and travel with all speed, to prevent some fearful tragedy, since she evidently fears an untimely end from her gaolers, who are in the pay of this infernal scoundrel."

"And you, my own dearest Edmund, what may not befall you in attempting her rescue? We have never yet been separated since our marriage. Oh, Edmund! should you not return, your Edith could not survive you."

"Edith, my own darling Edith, do not unman me now," he replied, pressing her to his breast. . . . "It is best to go at once—every hour may be of consequence! but you must not tell the earl or Mrs. Errington the errand on which I am going. Let me secure his child first, if still living, and I doubt not this can easily be effected. Her heartless husband there is, of course, no chance of meeting.

White Horse and Red Lion

He is too much occupied with his new victim to venture near the château. You have no danger to dread on my account, and I shall take my faithful servant with me ; so now, my beloved Edith, let me prepare for my journey."

Then there is the heavenly conversion of the gentleman with the Mohametan leanings—Mr. Chetwynd.

"Will you, Miss Edgerton, be my guide in search of these sacred truths, hitherto withholden from my sight?"

"Not withholden, Mr. Chetwynd ; you have not begun to search after them. You have contented yourself with earthly objects, earthly pleasures. The pages of that book which brings life and immortality to light, you have never perused. But if you are really desirous of such knowledge, I will lend you this work, *Paley's Evidences of Christianity*"—taking it down from the bookcase—"which will assist you in obtaining that wisdom which cometh from above."

Accepting with many thanks the proffered loan of the work, Chetwynd soon after took leave of his now interesting instructress, and remained the whole of that evening engrossed with his new study. However good in themselves, edifying and instructive, there is nothing like effective preaching to enforce the truth of the very best sermons ; and Chetwynd felt more convinced by Lucy Edgerton's persuasive, impassioned eloquence than by the clear expositions of the theologian whose work he was perusing, and he found himself continually sitting at the feet of the female Gamaliel, listening as an obedient little child to her instructions. . . . The result may be divined. He pleaded before her the necessity of her constant care and supervision, to keep him in the path she had taught him to pursue, even unto the end.

"Dearest Lucy," he said one day, taking her hand, "you have begun a good work ; oh ! do not leave it half done. I may relapse into my former evil ways and errors,

An Old-Fashioned Novel

from which you have reclaimed me. You have saved me from destruction. We may now be friends in this world and eternity. Oh ! let me hope that you will henceforth deign to be my guardian angel. By your sweet counsel I have become an altered being. I have now a nobler purpose than that of living for self, and worldly pleasures ; and, in the words of the beloved disciple, dearest Lucy, I beseech you, ‘ let us love one another.’ ”

“ I will not deny,” Lucy said calmly, “ that I feel a deep interest in your future welfare, and I trust, under Providence, I may have been the humble instrument of converting you from the error of your way ; yet marriage is a solemn obligation, too solemn to be hastily contracted. I must have time for reflection. I would see that the seed has fallen on good ground. I will not give you my final answer now ; but six months hence, should you continue in the same faith and mind perhaps,” she said, with a deep blush, “ I may not be inexorable.”

I think I could go on quoting this delicious work for ever. I like the preciosity which insists upon *débutanti* as a plural, and the care of the reader’s proper understanding which is conveyed in “ To an undergraduate of Oxford (the terms signifying a young man who has not taken his degree) . . . ” Finally, I adore an author who can write :—

To portray Alphonso’s rage as that of an exasperated tiger, or a lady-bear robbed of her cubs, would be a very faint similitude ; he could have stabbed Duncombe to the heart there and then, and torn his body into infinitesimally small pieces through one of his father’s cotton mills ; but as he glared upon him in his fury, the captain returned his savage look with one of such thorough pity that Alphonso sprang from the sofa, and retreated quickly to the other end of the room, for he felt almost tempted to stain his mamma’s best satin damask with the captain’s blood.

White Horse and Red Lion

It was five o'clock when I began to read, and past two in the morning before I finished this work which now forms one of my very select and distinguished company of bed-books. It has, I fear, long been out of print. If there be another copy in existence, let me hazard that it belongs to the editor of the *Morning Post*.

Not My Set

Not My Set

ON a day in March my eyes were gladdened by the sight of an officer in full fig proceeding St. James's Palace-wards in a taxi-cab. His breast glittered with orders and decorations, and once again I had that astonishing feeling of national security which not even the "brass-hats" whom I have known have ever succeeded in shaking.

"See yon bloke?" said the bus-conductor, pointing a thumb.

"Who?" I asked.

"'Im in the keb. That's General Sir Wallerin Gore! I was batman to 'im oncst. 'E weren't arf afeard of 'is old woman, 'e weren't, I give you my word!"

Those medals are for me the symbol of unutterable might. I am almost Chinese in my respect for symbols. In China the policeman bears on his chest the motto, "Strong Man," at seeing which the weakling criminal immediately gives himself up! Similarly the pirate junk will, at sight, surrender to a patrol boat carrying a greater number of painted cardboard guns. I cannot imagine an enemy of King George who, faced with those medals, would not at once yield up his sword. This, undoubtedly, was what the poet meant by the line:—

"And the enemies of England they shall see
me and be sick."

White Horse and Red Lion

The officer was proceeding to His Majesty's levee. This function is, of course, as old as Majesty itself. Tutankh-Amen, Solomon, and all the old fogeys doubtless held them, although one associates these functions principally with the indolent French kings. I am not quite sure whether indolent or industrious is the word. To receive Ministers of State whilst putting on a wig argues either a lazy fellow or a monarch so indefatigable that he will not waste a single moment of his waking hours. Personally I am not at my best before breakfast, and, had I been King of France, would have seen Richelieu and Mazarin and the Duc de Guise to blazes until I had read the paper and gone through my letters. Kings, in my view, should have an office and come down to business, say at ten o'clock. It is too bad that a private life should be denied them.

But it is possible that not affairs of State only were discussed at these "big" and "little" gettings-up. I conjecture that the valet of Louis XIV., for example, would tiptoe into the Royal bed-chamber unaccompanied by Ministers of State, draw the curtains, declare the hour, and ask deferentially when His Majesty proposed to show a leg.

I imagine le Roi Soleil, a little grumpy, yawning like an ordinary mortal and inquiring, "Anything fresh, François?"

And François would reply, say on or about June 5, 1660, "Sire, the courier from England has arrived. Those pig-dogs have come to their senses. Charles is King."

Not My Set

And Louis would murmur, "*Haut les pouces!*" and pass his hand across his throat, and feel himself more secure.

I can imagine Louis XV. sending a little note to Madame de Pompadour, hoping her morning coffee had been to her liking, and proposing to ride before lunch.

But I really cannot imagine any serious business being transacted.

In this more sober England of ours a Levee is not so informal an affair. The king makes his appearance fully clothed, and in his most august frame of mind. On that morning I read that he was attended by his Gentlemen-in-Waiting, escorted by a Captain's Escort of Life Guards, and received by the Great Officers of His Majesty's Household. The King's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard was on duty in the Palace. His Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms (whoever they may be) was on duty in the State saloons. The Clerk of the Cheque, the Exon-in-Waiting were present, and a Guard of Honour of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards was mounted in the Palace garden.

When I look at the list of company which has so distinguished itself that Majesty would shake hands with it, I am abashed. I cannot find the name of a soul who has contributed to my happiness in anything like the same degree, as, say my milkman, the boy who delivers my *Morning Post* and *Daily Herald*, the liftman at my Tube station, my bus-conductor, my policeman on point-duty,

White Horse and Red Lion

the young gentleman at Harridge's who sells me a neck-tie with the assurance that it is very "chaste."

I look down the list of A's and draw blank. B's discover one knowledgeable and knowable person—Major the Hon. Maurice Baring, the author of *Diminutive Dramas*. The next name is Baxter. But is this one Beverley of the *Sunday Express* who, hot from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan—*que sais-je?*—once asked me, in cold print, if I had ever heard of Irene Vanbrugh? I fear me it is not.

Bennetts there are in plenty, but alas! no trace of Arnold. A Shaw there is in the list and also a Wells; but they are gentlemen in whose hands I doubt not the sword has proved mightier than the pen. Of the distinguished company who have brought distinction into my life—not a soul!

"Coronations, mister," said an old Derbyshire farmer to me on the morning of the crowning of His Gracious Majesty King George, "coronations is rubbish."

We were sitting on a gate, the heavenly day not to be wasted on idle ceremony.

"I've nowt against the lad," went on the old farmer, "nor his feyther afore him, nor his grand-ma; it's the principle as is wrong."

My point is that Levees and Courts and Garden Parties and Drawing-Rooms are right in principle, but that the Master of the Christmas Cards, by inviting people known only to that insignificant fraction of the population of these islands called Society, is in reality convoking an assemblage of the

Not My Set

Nobodies. Whereas, were I the Addressee of the Envelopes, I would one day for a lark get together the Somebodies, the people of whom Everybody is talking.

To begin with, I should invite Harry Preston. I was his guest at Prince's prior to going on to the National Sporting Club. Something I had written about boxing had amused him, and better acquaintance had been desired. The party was a large one. In the middle of dinner Harry turned to me and said:—

“I should take you for an artist anywhere.”

(This was startling. A broken-down horse-dealer, perhaps . . .)

“And why?” I asked.

“I am an inn-keeper, and it is my business to judge people by their looks. Were you to ask me for a room I should unhesitatingly refuse you! A glass of wine with you, sir!”

Yes, I should certainly ask Harry Preston.

I should invite the 'Spurs *en bloc*, Donoghue and Sir Thomas Beecham, Alec Taylor and Hannen Swaffer, Jimmy Wilde and Dean Inge, Grock and James Douglas, 'Obbs, 'Endren, and 'Itch, Little Tich and Mr. Justice Darling, Eugene Corri and Eddie Marsh, Tom Webster and Melbourne Inman, “Charlie” Cochran and the Twenty Tazserwoulltes, Patmac and Mooney, Levy and Franks, and Mr. St. John Ervine.

That, I think, could justly be called a “distinguished company.”

White Horse and Red Lion

Prominent in the list I note my bus-conductor's former employer who was so afraid of his old woman. The list does not say to what arm of the service General Sir Wallerin Gore belonged, whether he once urged Gore's Own to wade through gallons of that ilk, or sent out urgent little chits inquiring into the "state" of tomatoes or plum and apple. It were unbearable that so doughty a name should be wasted upon Transport and Supply. The general's parents must have had that prescience which makes the authors of nascent poets endow them with such prophetic prænomena as Osbert and Sacheverell. General Sir Wallerin Gore! The name would have turned Dickens green with envy. Bind on Sir Wallerin's sword! Bind on Sir Wallerin's map-case, field-glasses, sandwich-box, and Thermos flask! Saddle white Surrey for the levee, and bind Sir Wallerin on him!

But no more of personages. I must confess that at these functions it is the menials who interest me. I know that I shall never be bidden amongst the guests, but that circumstances may very well arise whereby I shall be reduced to polishing the boots of one more favoured by fortune. I may yet hold a horse's head, or help some gouty duke into his carriage. Often have I passed Buckingham Palace on a Drawing-room night and known a fellow-feeling for yonder footman in the fawn livery holding out his arms to heaven like some

"Tall oak branch-charméd by the earnest stars."

Not My Set

The man is only stretching himself, of course, and nothing is farther from his mind than blushing Betelgeuse and red Aldebaran, bluish Vega and yellow Arcturus. He is thinking of White Label and Red Seal. Perhaps those Gentlemen-in-Waiting, those Yeomen, that Guard of Honour, embrace the same shade of thought. Peradventure Majesty itself, seated on golden throne, and finding crown and sceptre a trifle heavy—I presume that is the Drawing-room wear, it would be if I were king—may be thinking on Dick Phenyl's remark in the play: “If you don't take a wee drop of whisky after the labours of the day, when do you take a wee drop of whisky?”

But I grow impious. . . .

A Gem

A Gem

"A VERY interesting film of *The Doll's House* has been made by the Allied Artists' Corporation, with Madame Nazimova in the part of Nora. The picture shows what the play does not, the outdoor life of the characters as they move to and fro in the snow-covered streets of the Norwegian towns; and this side of the picture is an important contributor to the general realism, and has been exceedingly well done. Madame Nazimova's performance is a finely varied one, as the moods of the character demand. She is at her best in the later and more serious scenes. Mr. Alan Hale makes an impressive figure of Torvald—far more so than any actor on the stage has been able to do, *for the words of the part make any sort of convincingness impossible*. On the whole, the picture will appeal to a far wider public than can be said to respond to the play, and its early appearance in the kinema theatres will be welcome."—*Daily Paper*.

The italics are mine. A prologue endows Nora with a father who writes: "Darling Norakins, couldn't my baby get some more money from that big husband of hers?" In the first act Norakins turns cartwheels on the drawing-room floor. And so on. . . .

It occurs to me that as we laugh at America, so perhaps Norway laughs at us.

A sobering thought!

Scissors and Paste

Scissors and Paste

AN august reviewer of a recent book of essays unburdened himself thus : If there must be essays, let them be about something. And let not that something be " Musings over a Bowl of Goldfish," " Reflections upon my Cat," " Tits and Willows." Let the essayist deal in something real, something which we have forgotten, or never known. Let the poetasters bury their poetastes; and the essayist likewise.

This emboldens me to tell a plain tale of Michael Kelly, the theatrical manager of a hundred years ago, whose reminiscences, bound in claret faded to brown, came my way recently for an old song. Probably nobody living has seen this particular Kelly, and very few, I imagine, remember having read about him. Doran is silent, and mum, too, the learned Mantzius. Yet Kelly was a great man in his day, for thirty years stage-manager of the old King's Theatre in the Haymarket. Hazlitt makes Northcote say in his Fourth Conversation :—

Northcote said, he had been reading Kelly's *Reminiscences*. I asked him what he thought of them ? He said, they were the work of a well-meaning man, who fancied all those about him good people, and everything they uttered clever. I said, I recollected his singing formerly with Mrs. Arnold, and that he used to give great effect to some things of sentiment, such as, " Oh ! had I been by fate decreed," etc., in *Love in a Village*. Northcote said, he did not much like him : there was a jerk, a kind

White Horse and Red Lion

of *brogue* in his singing ; though he had, no doubt, considerable advantage in being brought up with all the great singers and having performed on all the first stages in Italy. I said, there was no echo of all that now. "No," said Northcote, "nor in my time, though I was there just after him. He asked me once, many years ago, if I had heard of him in Italy, and I said no, though I excused myself by stating that I had only been at Rome, where the stage was less an object, the Pope there performing the chief part himself." I answered, that I meant there was no echo of the fine singing at present in Italy, music being there dead as well as painting, or reduced to mere screaming, noise, and rant. "It is odd," he said, "how their genius seems to have left them. Everything of that sort appears to be at present no better than it is with us in a country town : or rather it wants the simplicity and rustic innocence, and is more like the draggle-tailed finery of a lady's waiting-maid. They have nothing of their own : all is at second-hand."

Italy, it may be thought, was not dead in Northcote's time, but sleeping.

Young Kelly was born in Dublin round about 1764. His father was Master of Ceremonies at the Castle, and a wine-merchant of considerable reputation in Mary Street. He was "known for his elegant and graceful deportment, and no lady would be presented at the Irish Court, who had not previously had the advantage of his tuition." His mother was of a very respectable family in West Meath. Both parents were "excessively fond of music and considered to sing with taste."

Kelly's first music-master was one Morland, who shared his namesake's taste for dissipation. I transcribe the next two pages of the *Memoirs*, for

Scissors and Paste

the echo of songs and singers so lost in time and fashion that they may be said never to have been.

Morland's first visit was generally to our house, for he was partial to my father, or rather to his currant whisky, and so anxious was my father that I should receive instruction from him, that I have been kept up till one o'clock in the morning on the mere chance of getting a lesson. My improvement under him was rapid, and before I had attained my ninth year, I could execute with precision and neatness Schubert's *Sonatas*, which were then all the fashion. I also possessed a soprano voice, on which my father was determined to bestow every possible cultivation. My first singing masters were Signor Passerini, a native of Bologna, and Signor Peretti, who was a *vero musico*. He was the original Artaxerxes when the opera of that name was first performed at Covent Garden; he taught me the beautiful air, "In infancy our hopes and fears," which was composed for him, and it made an impression on my mind never to be forgotten. He had a fine *contre alto* voice, and possessed the true *portamento* so little known in the present day. He also taught me the song of Arbaces, "Amid a thousand racking woes," which I executed with the greatest facility; but the songs which delighted me most were, "Oh, too lovely, too unkind," and "Oh, why is death for ever late?" I never sang those without tears. Another great favourite of mine was that in *Lionel and Clarissa*, composed by Galupi. By the way, all the *Lionels* of the present day think proper to omit that fine song; perhaps they are right, and for the reason once given to me by an Irish post-boy, whom I was scolding for not driving faster; he turned round, and exclaimed, "By Jasus, master, it is not an easy thing to work hard." . . . About this time I changed my singing master, and was placed under Signor St. Giorgio who was engaged at the Rotunda; his voice was not powerful, but he possessed exquisite taste. He was an honest man, and married a widow with large property, previously to which he, Signor Caviralli, Signor Michelli, and Signor Sensi,

White Horse and Red Lion

got a £30,000 prize in the lottery, a piece of good fortune of which he was very deserving, and I believe is still living to enjoy.

Dublin, in Kelly's early days, could boast of much musical excellence. The boy could remember Mr. and Mrs. Barthelemon, Le Vacher, Pepe, La Motte, Cramer, Salomon, Pinto, Ritter the bassoon-player, Crosdil the 'cellist, Fischer the great oboe player. The singers included a Miss Jameson, who was a pupil of Dr. Arne, Mrs. Cramer, and Rauzzini, so handsome that in Rome, where women were not permitted to appear upon the stage, he invariably performed the part of *prima donna*. Rauzzini, to his undoing, was invited by the Elector of Bavaria to visit Munich. For there "an exalted personage became deeply and hopelessly enamoured of him, and, in spite of his talents, it was suggested to him that a change of air would be for the benefit of his health. He took the hint, and left Munich : he then engaged himself at the Italian opera in London, where he attained the highest reputation both as a singer and composer ; and his acting in *Pyramus*, in the opera of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, was so fine, that Garrick has often complimented him on it. "

Before leaving Dublin Rauzzini addressed the following remark to Kelly père :—

" My dear Sir, depend upon it your son will never follow any profession but that of a musician ; and as there is no person in this country who can give him the instruction he requires, you ought to send him to Italy. He is now

Scissors and Paste

at the time of life to imbibe true taste, and in Italy only is it to be found. If you send him to Rome, let him study under Latilla ; if to Naples (the better place of the two), send him to either of the Conservatorios—the head master at St. Onofrio is Monopoli, at the other, La Madonna di Loretto, Finerolli is master. This celebrated Conservatorio produced Scarlatti, Duranti, Porpori (at that time the greatest of all singing masters) Pergolesi, Jomelli, Cimarosa, Paesiello, and a long list of celebrated men : let him go there, and depend upon it he will one day repay you for it.”

This advice appears to have made the deepest impression upon the old gentleman, particularly as a similar opinion had been given by Sir William, then Mr. Parsons, “ the late musical composer and magistrate of Bow Street, who had studied music in Italy.” Mr. Kelly, apparently, rejoiced to know the butcher paints, etc. Times are changed. Our magistrates no longer study music in Italy.

So abroad young Kelly went, provided with letters of recommendation to Sir William Hamilton—at that time *Chargé d’Affaires* at the Court of Naples—a grand piano, a gold watch and ten guineas. Here follows an incident worthy of Marryat:—

My father had a small country house near Drumcondra, with an extensive garden ; his gardener, whose name was Cunningham, had a son, a very fine young man, who was a great favourite with all the family, and received many marks of kindness from my father, which he repaid to me when a child, by continued acts of affection. Poor Jack, however, degenerated, became a drunkard, associated with depraved companions, and left my father’s service ; shortly after, he was implicated in a burglary, tried and

White Horse and Red Lion

transported to America. This made a grievous impression on me at the time, as I recollected, with gratitude, the apples and plums which had been gathered for me by poor Jack Cunningham.

My voyage took place during the American War, but the ship I was on board of, being a Swede, was under a neutral flag; yet, in the Bay of Biscay, we were hailed by an American privateer. Our captain lay to, while a set of the greatest ragamuffins my eyes ever beheld, boarded us. They swore the vessel was under false colours, and proceeded to overhaul the captain's papers, and seize everything they could lay hands on. A sturdy ruffian began to break open my piano-forte case with a hatchet, which, when I saw, I *manfully* began to weep, and cry out, "Oh! my dear piano-forte," etc., etc. The cabin boy, who was about my own age, called out, "For God's sake don't cry, MASTER KELLY." The chief mate of the privateer, who was quietly perusing some of our Captain's papers, on hearing these words, turned round, and looking steadfastly at me, said, "Is *your* name Kelly?" I answered "Yes." "Do you know anything of a Mr. Thomas Kelly, of Mary Street, Dublin?" said he. "He is my father," was my reply. The young man immediately started up, ran to me, clasped me in his arms, and with tears in his eyes, said, "Don't you remember me? I am Jack Cunningham, who, when you were a little boy, nursed you and played with you." He seemed quite overcome by the unexpected meeting, and made the most affectionate inquiries about my family, when, after examination, the Captain finding that our vessel was really a neutral, left us. Jack again embracing and blessing me, took leave of me, and we soon lost sight of them. I never heard of him more.

Sir William received the boy well, quoted Gay on the theme of "to-day for pleasure, to-morrow for business," bade him take a fortnight's holiday, and gave him a purse of twenty ounces to pay for his calashes.

Scissors and Paste

"We dined at the St. Carlino tavern, opposite the King's palace; we had an excellent dinner of macaroni stuffato, bouilli, stewed veal, fried calamara, a roast chicken, sallad, cheese, fruit, biscuits, two bottles of wine, a cup of coffee each, and a glass of chasé caffè, with iced lemonade, etc., for eighteenpence each.

"The next morning we went to Portici, and slept. We saw the theatre at Herculaneum, which had been buried sixteen centuries; and passed under vaults to view it by torch-light; while wandering about the galleries, I was, of course, obliged to express surprise and pleasure; but in truth I wished myself away, for there were neither singers nor dancers, nor pretty women there, and I never had any taste for antiques. . . .

"The two following days we dedicated to Baiae, and its burning sands. The view of Naples, and indeed everything except the people, was luxurious and beautiful; they were wretched. One miserable object pointed out the different situations of the villas of Cæsar, Mark Antony, and Cicero. All this was, I knew, very fine, and very classical; but to me, at that period, a complete bore; it was not my *gusto* to 'shun the busy haunts of men,' nor of women; and a petticoat in a populous street in Naples, was to me the finest sight in the world; but I had no wish to accomplish the Neapolitan proverb—*Vedi Napoli e poi mori.*"

Young Kelly had a good eye to the musical manners of the time.

The Romans assume that they are the most sapient critics in the world; they are certainly the most severe ones; they have no medium—all is delight or disgust. If asked whether a performance or a piece has been successful, the answer, if favourable, is, "*è andato al settimo cielo*,"—"it has ascended to the seventh heaven." If it has failed, they say, "*è andato al abbisso del inferno*,"—"it has sunk to the abyss of hell." The severest critics are the Abbés, who sit in the first row of the pit, each armed with a lighted wax taper in one hand, and a book

White Horse and Red Lion

of the opera in the other, and should any poor devil of a singer miss a word, they call out, "*bravo, bestia*,"—"bravo, you beast!"

It is customary for the composer of an opera, to preside at the pianoforte the first three nights of its performance, and a precious time he has of it in Rome. Should any passage in the music strike the audience as similar to one of another composer, they cry, "*Bravo, il ladro*,"—"Bravo, you thief"; or, "*Bravo, Paesiello! Bravo, Sacchini!*" If they suppose the passage stolen from them, "The curse of God light on him who first put a pen into your hand to write music!" This I heard said, in the Teatro del Altiberti, to the celebrated composer Gazzaniga, who was obliged to sit patiently at the pianoforte to hear the flattering commendation.

When Kelly's tuition was complete and the time came for him to leave Naples, the boy made his master, the great Aprile, a present of his piano. Perhaps a footnote relating to this is worth reproduction.

Many years afterwards, when dining with my dear and lamented friend, the late Lady Hamilton, at Merton, I had the pleasure of hearing of this circumstance from the illustrious Lord Nelson, near whom I had the honour of being seated at table. He said, "Mr. Kelly, when in Naples, I have frequently heard your old master, Aprile, speak of you with great affection, though he said, that when with him, you were as wild as a colt. He mentioned also, your having given him your piano-forte, which, he said, nothing should induce him to part with." I confess I was much gratified by the repetition of this trifling anecdote.

Kelly made his debut in Florence, and thereby became the first British male singer to perform in Italy. Lord and Lady Cowper were present and

260

Scissors and Paste

also the Pretender, "who entered his box before the opera began. He was at that time very old and infirm, yet there appeared the remains of a very handsome man. He was very tall, but stooped considerably, and was usually supported by two of his suite, between whom he hobbled ; in this state he visited one of the theatres every night (he had a box in each) ; in a few minutes after he was seated, he fell asleep, and continued to slumber during the whole performance. The Italians always called him the King of England, and he had the arms of England over the gates of his palace, and all his servants wore the royal livery. The Order of the Garter, which he wore when I saw him, he left to his natural daughter, Princess Stolberg.

About this time Kelly heard the great bass, Morelli. The following seems to me interesting.

It is perhaps not generally known, that, in the early part of his life, Morelli was Lord Cowper's volante, or running footman. One night, when going to bed, his Lordship's attention was attracted by some one singing an air, from an opera then in vogue ; the person was seated on the steps of a church, opposite to his Lordship's palace : the prodigious quality of the voice, the fine ear and excellent taste displayed, astonished his Lordship. He ordered his valet to inquire who the extraordinary performer could be ; the valet replied, "that he knew very well ; it was young Giovanni, one of his Lordship's volantes. His ear for music is so perfect," said the valet, "that whatever he hears, he catches instantly : he often sings to the servants, and is the delight of us all." The following morning, Giovanni was ushered into his Lordship's breakfast room, where he sang several songs, in a style and with execution to surprise him still more ! His

White Horse and Red Lion

Lordship ordered Signor Mansoli, Signor Verolli, and Camproni, Maestro di Capella to the Grand Duke, to hear him ; they all declared it the finest voice they had ever heard, and that he only wanted instruction to become the very first bass singer in the world ! “ Then,” said Lord Cowper, “ that he shall not want long—from this moment I take him under my protection, and he shall have the best instruction Italy can afford.”

Times are changed. Noblemen, to-day, are not partial to singing footmen.

I shall pass quickly over Kelly’s travels through Europe. They betray the gallant in the opera-singer, and are told in pleasant vein. What professional diarist could have done better than the following :—

I found at Bologna by accident Signora Palmi, the prima donna, who was engaged to sing with me at Venice. We agreed to travel together. She was a very handsome woman, though on a large scale ; her husband, *au contraire*, was a diminutive, shrivelled old man, and jealous in the extreme ; he, with her mother (an ugly old body), a little black boy, a servant, and a lap dog, composed her suite. With these rational and pleasing companions did I embark in the canal passage-boat from Bologna to Ferrara. . . .

The traveller made special journey to the palace of Prince Esterhazy at Eisenstadt for the purpose of paying his respects to Haydn, who received him with great hospitality and kindness. “ The Prince had the goodness to desire Haydn to take one of his carriages, that we might drive about and see all the beauties of this terrestrial paradise, for such I thought it.”

Scissors and Paste

But it was at Vienna that Kelly enjoyed the greatest gratification of his musical life—his introduction to Mozart.

Mozart favoured the company by performing fantasias and capriccios on the piano-forte. His feeling, the rapidity of his fingers, the great execution and strength of his left hand, particularly, and the apparent inspiration of his modulations, astounded me. After this splendid performance we sat down to supper, and I had the pleasure to be placed at table between him and his wife, Madame Constance Weber, a German lady of whom he was passionately fond, and by whom he had three children. He conversed with me a good deal about Thomas Linley, the first Mrs. Sheridan's brother, with whom he was intimate at Florence, and spoke of him with great affection. He said that Linley was a true genius, and he felt that, had he lived, he would have been one of the greatest ornaments of the musical world. After supper the young branches of our host had a dance, and Mozart joined them. Madame Mozart told me, that great as his genius was, he was an enthusiast in dancing, and often said that his taste lay in that art, rather than in music.

He was a remarkably small man, very thin and pale, with a profusion of fine fair hair, of which he was rather vain. He gave me a cordial invitation to his house, of which I availed myself, and passed a great part of my time there. He always received me with kindness and hospitality. He was remarkably fond of punch, of which beverage I have seen him take copious draughts. He was also fond of billiards, and had an excellent billiard table in his house. Many and many a game have I played with him, but always came off second best. He gave Sunday concerts, at which I never was missing. He was kind-hearted, and always ready to oblige, but so very particular, when he played, that, if the slightest noise were made, he instantly left off. He one day made me sit down to the piano, and gave credit to my first master, who had taught me to place my hand well on the instrument. He conferred on me what I considered a high compliment.

White Horse and Red Lion

I had composed a little melody to Metastasio's canzonetta, *Grazie agl' inganni tuori*, which was a great favourite wherever I sang it. It was very simple but had the good fortune to please Mozart. He took it and composed variations upon it, which were truly beautiful; and had the further kindness and condescension, to play them wherever he had an opportunity.

The air, as arranged by Mozart, follows here. It is entirely unremarkable. Kelly asks the great man whether he should continue the study of counterpoint. This is the reply :—

“ My good lad, you ask my advice, and I will give it candidly; had you studied composition when you were at Naples, and when your mind was not devoted to other pursuits, you would perhaps have done wisely; but now that your profession of the stage must, and ought, to occupy all your attention, it would be an unwise measure to enter into a dry study. You may take my word for it, Nature has made you a melodist, and you would only disturb and perplex yourself. Reflect, ‘ *a little knowledge is a dangerous thing* ’;—should there be errors in what you write, you will find hundreds of musicians, in all parts of the world, capable of correcting them, therefore do not disturb your natural gift.

“ Melody is the essence of music. I compare a good melodist to a fine racer, and counterpointists to hack post-horses, therefore be advised, let *well alone*, and remember the old Italian proverb—*Chi sa più, meno sa*—Who knows most, knows least.”

Shortly after this Kelly was present at a quartette party given by Storace, the composer, to his friends.

The players were tolerable, not one of them excelled on the instrument he played; but there was a little

Scissors and Paste

science among them, which I dare say will be acknowledged when I name them :—

The First Violin	HAYDN
The Second Violin	BARON DITTERSDORF
The Violoncello	VANHALL
The Tenor	MOZART

The poet Casti and Paesiello formed part of the audience. I was there, and a greater treat or a more remarkable one cannot be imagined.

And now he was introduced to Monsieur Martini.

He was a very old man. His sister, nearly his own age, kept his house for him. She was reckoned a deep blue, and very well versed in all the arts and sciences. The great poet Metastasio had lived *sixty years* in her brother's house, upon the most friendly terms, and died in it. The colleges of Bologna and Pavia gave her the title of Dottoressa, and deputations came from both those places, with her diploma. When I was admitted to her conversaziones, and musical parties, she was in the vale of years, yet still possessed the gaiety and vivacity of a girl, and was polite and affable to all. Mozart was an almost constant attendant at her parties, and I have heard him play duets on the piano-forte with her, of his own composition. She was a great favourite of his.

At one of her parties I had the pleasure to be introduced to Mrs. Piozzi, who, with her husband, was travelling on the continent; there appeared to me a great similarity in the manners of these two gifted women, who conversed with all around them without pedantry or affectation. It was certainly an epoch, not to be forgotten, to have had the good fortune, on the same evening, to be in company with the favourites of Metastasio and Dr. Johnson, and last, not least, with Mozart himself.

After Mozart, Gluck.

White Horse and Red Lion

Gluck was then living at Vienna, where he had retired, crowned with professional honours, and a splendid fortune, courted and caressed by all ranks, and in his seventy-fourth year.

L'Iphigenia was the first opera to be produced, and Gluck was to make his choice of the performers in it. Madame Bernasconi was one of the first serious singers of the day—to her was appropriated the part of Iphigenia. The celebrated tenor, Ademberger, performed the part of Orestes, finely. To me was allotted the character of Pylades, which created no small envy among those performers who thought themselves better entitled to the part than myself, and perhaps they were right ;—however, I had it, and also the high gratification of being instructed in the part by the composer himself.

One morning, after I had been singing with him, he said, "Follow me up stairs, Sir, and I will introduce you to one, whom, all my life, I have made my study, and endeavoured to imitate." I followed him into his bedroom, and, opposite to the head of the bed, saw a full-length picture of Handel, in a rich frame. "There, Sir," said he, "is the portrait of the inspired master of our art ; when I open my eyes in the morning, I look upon him with reverential awe, and acknowledge him as such, and the highest praise is due to your country for having distinguished and cherished his gigantic genius."

L'Iphigenia was soon put into rehearsal, and a corps de ballet engaged for the incidental dances belonging to the piece. The ballet master was Monsieur De Camp, the uncle of that excellent actress, and accomplished and deserving woman, Mrs. Charles Kemble. Gluck superintended the rehearsals, with his powdered wig, and gold-headed cane ; the orchestra and choruses were augmented, and all the parts were well filled.

The second opera was *Alceste*, which was got up with magnificence and splendour, worthy an Imperial Court.

For describing the strongest passions in music, and proving grand dramatic effect, in my opinion, no man ever equalled Gluck—he was a great painter of music ; perhaps the expression is far-fetched, and may not be

Scissors and Paste

allowable, but I speak from my own feelings, and the sensation his descriptive music always produced on me. For example, I never could hear, without tears, the dream of Orestes, in *Iphigenia*: when in sleep, he prays the gods to give a ray of peace to the parricide Orestes. What can be more expressive of deep and dark despair? And the fine chorus of the demons who surround his couch, with the ghost of his mother, produced in me a feeling of horror, mixed with delight.

Dr. Burney (no mean authority) said, Gluck was the Michael Angelo of living composers, and called him the simplifying musician. Salieri told me that a comic opera of Gluck's being performed at the Elector Palatine's theatre, at Schwetzingen, his Electoral Highness was struck with the music, and inquired who had composed it; on being informed that he was an honest German who loved *old wine*, his Highness immediately ordered him a tun of Hock.

Kelly's pages hereabouts are full of enchantment, and this essayist makes no apology for lengthy quotation.

There were three operas now on the tapis, one by Regini, another by Salieri (the Grotto of Trophonius), and one by Mozart, by special command of the Emperor. Mozart chose to have Beaumarchais' French comedy, *Le Mariage de Figaro* made into an Italian opera, which was done with great ability, by Da Ponte. These three pieces were nearly ready for representation at the same time, and each composer claimed the right of producing his opera for the first. The contest raised much discord, and parties were formed. The characters of the three men were all very different. Mozart was as touchy as gun-powder, and swore he would put the score of his opera into the fire if it was not produced first; his claim was backed by a strong party: on the contrary, Regini was working like a mole in the dark to get precedence.

The third candidate was Maestro di Cappella to the court, a clever, shrewd man, possessed of what Bacon

White Horse and Red Lion

called crooked wisdom, and his claims were backed by three of the principal performers, who formed a cabal not easily put down. Every one of the opera company took part in the contest. I alone was a stickler for Mozart, and naturally enough, for he had a claim on my warmest wishes, from my adoration of his powerful genius, and the debt of gratitude I owed him, for many personal favours.

The mighty contest was put an end to by His Majesty issuing a mandate for Mozart's *Nozze de Figaro*, to be instantly put into rehearsal; and none more than Michael O'Kelly enjoyed the little great man's triumph over his rivals.

Of all the performers in this opera at that time, but one survives—myself. It was allowed that never was opera stronger cast. I have seen it performed at different periods in other countries, and well too, but no more to compare with its original performance than light is to darkness. All the original performers had the advantage of the instruction of the composer, who transfused into their minds his inspired meaning. I never shall forget his little animated countenance, when lighted up with the glowing rays of genius;—it is as impossible to describe it, as it would be to paint sun-beams.

I called on him one evening, he said to me, "I have just finished a little duet for my opera, you shall hear it." He sat down to the piano, and we sang it. I was delighted with it, and the musical world will give me credit for being so, when I mention the duet, sung by Count Almaviva and Susan, "*Crudel perchè finora farmi languire così.*" A more delicious morceau was never penned by man, and it has often been a source of pleasure to me, to have been the first who heard it, and to have sung it with its greatly gifted composer. I remember at the first rehearsal of the full band, Mozart was on the stage with his crimson pelisse and gold-laced cocked hat, giving the time of the music to the orchestra. Figaro's song, "*Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso,*" Bennuci gave, with the greatest animation, and power of voice.

I was standing close to Mozart, who, *sotto voce*, was repeating, "*Bravo, Bravo, Bennuci*"; and when Bennuci

Scissors and Paste

came to the fine passage, "Cherubino, alla vittoria, alla gloria militar," which he gave out with stentorian lungs, the effect was electricity itself, for the whole of the performers on the stage, and those in the orchestra, as if actuated by one feeling of delight, vociferated "*Bravo ! Bravo ! Maestro. Viva, viva, grande Mozart.*" Those in the orchestra I thought would never have ceased applauding, by beating the bows of their violins against the music desks. The little man acknowledged, by repeated obeisances, his thanks for the distinguished mark of enthusiastic applause bestowed upon him.

Interesting pages follow, in which it is debated whether in the sestetto in the second act, Mozart's favourite piece of the whole opera, the Stuttering Judge should stutter. Mozart, fearful lest his music be spoiled, desired that he should not ; Kelly, imperfectly deferent, insisted that he should. The composer gave way, and, Kelly's method meeting with immense success, complimented him handsomely on his better judgment.

Kelly agreed with Linley to make his English debut in the part of Lionel in *Lionel and Clarissa*, on April 20th, 1787. But though an operatic swell, he was still very young. Dr. Arnold, in the presence of Madame Mara and Mr. Linley, joint proprietors of Drury Lane, said : "Pray, Mr. Kelly, tell us what sort of singer is Signora Storace ?" "The best in Europe," replied the lad unthinkingly. Which prompted jealous Madam Mara to declare him an impertinent coxcomb ! Kelly, however, survived the lady's wrath, and also a commemorative performance of *The Messiah*, held in Westminster Abbey with the help of several

White Horse and Red Lion

hundreds of instrumentalists and some hundreds of singers. So the Crystal Palace is not responsible, as one thought, for these afflicting orgies.

And now we approach that great era of the British stage—the days of Lamb's *Old Actors*. The objection has often been made that greatness resided not in the players but in their memorialist. Let us examine this informed, contemporary, strictly non-literary opinion.

Elliston played Carlos "with great judgment and feeling, considering his youth (this was in 1791 when the actor was forty-seven years of age !) and considering, moreover, that Kemble was the Zanga." Of his début in London at the Haymarket in June, 1796, Kelly says that his admirable voice and excellent acting as Octavia in *The Mountaineers*, and Vapour in *My Grandmother*, stamped him, at once, "a favourite, which he continues to this day ; I need hardly say, how very deservedly so."

Bensley was "a good actor, and a perfect gentleman. I have seen him often, with great pleasure, act Prospero in *The Tempest*, and Iago and Pierre : his Malvolio, in *Twelfth Night*, was considered a fine performance. He had a manner of rolling his eyes when speaking ; and a habit, whenever he entered the green room, of stirring the fire with great ceremony, *secundum artem*, in which habit, I was in the habit of imitating him ; he caught me once in the very fact, and joined heartily in the laugh against himself."

Compare Lamb's description of this actor's

Scissors and Paste

Malvolio. Surely the germ of those splendid pages is in this simple allusion to the trick with the eyes and the habit of the poker. Probably, in his private life, Bensley *was* Malvolio.

Dodd was "an actor of the good old school. On my first appearance at Drury Lane, he performed the part of Jessamy, in *Lionel and Clarissa* ; and although then bordering on his sixtieth year, I never saw it so admirably represented ; indeed, all his fops were excellent, particularly Lord Foppington, and Sparkish, in the *Country Girl*. I have often seen him, with infinite pleasure, in Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Abel Drugger, and Old Kecksey, in the *Irish Widow*. He was an entertaining companion, very fond of convivial meetings ; he knew a vast number of comic songs, and was *renommé* for recounting good stories, although it must be confessed they were somewhat of the longest."

Of Palmer the elder and, according to Doran, the more coxcombical, we read, "no actor was ever more generally efficient ; in some characters he was excellent, in none indifferent. His acting as Joseph Surface, Stukely in *The Gamester*, Dyonisius in *The Grecian Daughter*, Young Wilding in *The Liar*, Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, was perfection."

Kemble comes to life again in a score of words or so :—

"But the powerful objection was the unearthly appearance of Kemble as the Monk (in Lewis's romance). I never shall forget his attitude imme-

White Horse and Red Lion

diately after his entrance ; his dress—the look—the *tout ensemble*—struck me to be more than human. He was hailed with the most rapturous applause ; but he stood motionless, with uplifted eyes, and apparently regardless of the public tribute.”

This justifies Hazlitt’s pronouncement that Kemble did not raise tragedy from earth, but lowered it from the skies.

Kelly was present at Kean’s debut as Shylock on that famous 26th of January, 1814, and at his first appearance as Richard III. This—and it shall be my last excerpt—is what I find about the little man’s Othello.

In my humble opinion, Kean’s acting in the third act of *Othello*, is his best performance. The first night he acted it at Drury Lane, I sat in my seat in the orchestra, which was appropriated to me, as Director of the Music, and next to me was Lord Byron, who said, “ Mr. Kelly, depend upon it, this is a man of genius.”

Mr. Sheridan, though very curious to see him, would not go to the theatre ; having made a vow, in consequence of some offence he had received from the Committee of Management, never to enter its walls. Mrs. Sheridan, who at this time was very ill, and confined for many weeks, had also a great curiosity to see Mr. Kean perform the part of Othello ; but as she could not venture to the theatre, Mr. Sheridan requested Kean to come to his house, and read the play, which he did.

The following day I saw Sheridan, and asked his opinion of Kean ; he told me he was very much pleased with him, that he had once studied the part of Othello himself, to act at Sir Watkin Williams Wynn’s private theatre, in Wales ; and that Kean’s conception of Othello was the precise counterpart of his own. This, which, as it was intended, no doubt, for a compliment, would have sounded

Scissors and Paste

like vanity in anybody else, in a man of Mr. Sheridan's acknowledged ability, must have been highly flattering to Mr. Kean.

But my scissors are becoming blunt, and my paste is exhausted. I fully expect to be told that my "find" is no find at all, that every gentleman's library has its Kelly, that you stumble over him on Mudie's threshold, that he cumpers the bookstalls at the railway stations. This may be so. No man, not even a professional essayist, is at all times wise, nor about all things. Let me confess that until a fortnight ago Michael Kelly was to me hardly a name. It is in the belief that he may not be more than a name to many of my readers that I have cut him up in paragraphs. Let those rebuke me to whom Kelly is a household word.

Certain of these essays, or parts of them, have appeared in *The Saturday Review*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Daily Chronicle*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Sunday Chronicle*, and *The Sunday Express*. I beg to offer the customary acknowledgments to the proprietors concerned.

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